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Alutiiq ethnicity

Partnow, Patricia Hartley, Ph.D.

University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1993

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ALUTIIQ ETHNICITY

A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Patricia Hartley Partnow, A.B., M.A.

Fairbanks, Alaska

December 1993

ALUTIIQ ETHNICITY

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ALUTIIQ ETHNICITY

by

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ABSTRACT

In this project I consider how Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs (Pacific Eskimos) maintain and express a sense of continuity with their past and how in today's world they use their understanding of the past to renegotiate and reenact their ethnic identity. I do so through an ethnohistorical reconstruction of Alutiiq ethnic identity from precontact days to the present and through a consideration of the role oral tradition and community ritual play in the constant reformulation of Alutiiq identity. I discuss the symbols considered most diagnostically Alutiiq (i.e., those which make up the Alutiiq identity configuration) and explore their meanings as Alutiiqs utilize and manipulate them in a variety of settings.

Originally based on a common language, the Alutiiq identity developed into a full-blown ethnicity over a period of 200 years of contact with non-indigenous peoples, first the Russians and then the Americans. As Alutiiq identity became more uniform and pervasive throughout the

Alaska Peninsula, its uniformity was balanced by a cultural tendency toward emphasis on local society. Today's Alutiiq identity configuration is characterized by ties to the land, a belief in a shared history with other Alutiiqs, acknowledgement of Alutiiq as the ancestral language, adherence to some level of subsistence lifestyle, and a kinship link to Alutiiqs of the past.

For this study I undertook both archival research and fieldwork, the latter focusing on folklore transmission and performance (particularly ethnohistorical narratives and ritual performances). I discuss how verbal and dramatic folklore performances, considered in historic, social, and cultural context, serve as a vehicle for defining, reconceptualizing, and reinforcing ethnicity.

I employ a situational (in contrast to a group-with-boundaries) model of ethnicity in conjunction with ethnohistoric and folklore analysis to illuminate the processes which have led to today's Alutiiq identity configuration. I further consider the ramifications the Alutiiq case has for general ethnicity theory.

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I am extremely grateful to the people of Chignik Lake, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay for allowing me to be their guest for a time and for sharing a part of their lives with me. I hope I have fairly represented them in this work.

The fieldwork which formed part of the research for this dissertation was carried out with financial support from a University of Alaska travel grant, the Jacobs Fund of the Whatcom Museum, and the National Science Foundation, Division of Polar Programs. I greatly appreciate the support of these organizations.

I dedicate this work to Peter Partnow, who supported me emotionally, intellectually, and financially over the four years of my doctoral program and was always able to interject a note of humor, and to Seth and Alix Partnow, who provided life and perspective.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Ethnicity is now at the center of conflicts around the world. "Every separatist movement in Europe that I can think of bases itself on 'ethnicity', linguistic or not," historian E. J. Hobsbawm told the audience at the 1991 American Anthropological Association's annual meeting (1992:4). Yet current events took social scientists by surprise. Having failed to predict the importance ethnicity would have in shaping politics, they now call for concentrated studies of the issue. Hobsbawm continued,

> In my book *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* I suggest that these short-term changes and shifts of ethnic identities constitute "the area of national studies in which thinking and research are most urgently needed today", and I maintain this view (1992:5).

Although the United States is not in imminent danger of dissolution along ethnic lines, the image of this country as the Great Melting Pot is fading with each public expression of ethnicity. Many Americans feel threatened by what they perceive as exclusionary -- and hence "un-American" -- ethnic strategies. They are suspicious of

movements to strengthen non-English languages, foster international festivals, or revitalize ethnic enclaves in America's cities. In Alaska, some fear ethnically-based political activities like the Alaska Native sovereignty movement, which seeks to reinstate indigenous political, educational, and/or judicial authority in communities in which tribal identity has been extinguished or is in question.

In this research I explore the general questions of why and how ethnic identities persist and how ethnicity affects the lives of individuals. I do so through an investigation of the ethnicity of Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs[1] (also termed Pacific Eskimos, Suk, Sugcestun Aleuts, and Sugpiat). These people staunchly maintain their identity as "Aleuts" or "Alutiiqs" in opposition to *Milik'aanaqs* (Caucasian Americans), *Taya'uqs* (Aleutian Island Aleuts) and Eskimos. In carrying out the research, I looked at how the Alutiiqs maintain and express a sense of continuity with their past, searched for the historic roots of today's sense of Alutiiqness, and investigated how the definition of Alutiiqness is continuously renegotiated.

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[1]In the Alutiiq language, the word *Alutiiq* is singular, the dual form is *Alutiik*, and the plural (three or more) is *Alutiit*. When Alutiiq speakers converse in English, they invariably anglicize the plural of Alutiiq words by adding "s" to the singular form to denote both dual and plural. Thus *Alutiit* becomes *Alutiiqs*, *Yupiit* becomes *Yup'iks*, and so on. I have followed this practice to reflect common usage.

I approach these questions from the related perspectives of ethnohistory and folklore. From an ethnohistorical perspective I explore the historic development of an ethnic sense on the Alaska Peninsula and the ways the people who now call themselves *Alutiiq* have used ethnicity to describe and explain events and people of the past. I consulted both written and oral sources derived from both Alutiiqs and outside observers.

From the perspective of folklore I focus on what local stories, ritual performances, and oral histories say about being Alutiiq, both now and in the past.

The Study Area

The narrow Alaska Peninsula, 475 miles long and averaging only 50 miles in width, extends from Iliamna Lake in southwestern Alaska to Unimak Island in the Aleutians. The entire length of the peninsula's southeastern Pacific shore is dominated by the rugged volcanic Aleutian Range. The northwestern Bering Sea/Bristol Bay shore of the peninsula, in contrast, is a flat, lake-studded tundra (Figure 1). The peninsula enjoys a maritime climate with an average annual temperature of 40 degrees and a yearly precipitation of from 20" to 75", depending on location. The region is rich in salmon, halibut, and herring. In the past, and to some extent today as well, the sea provided

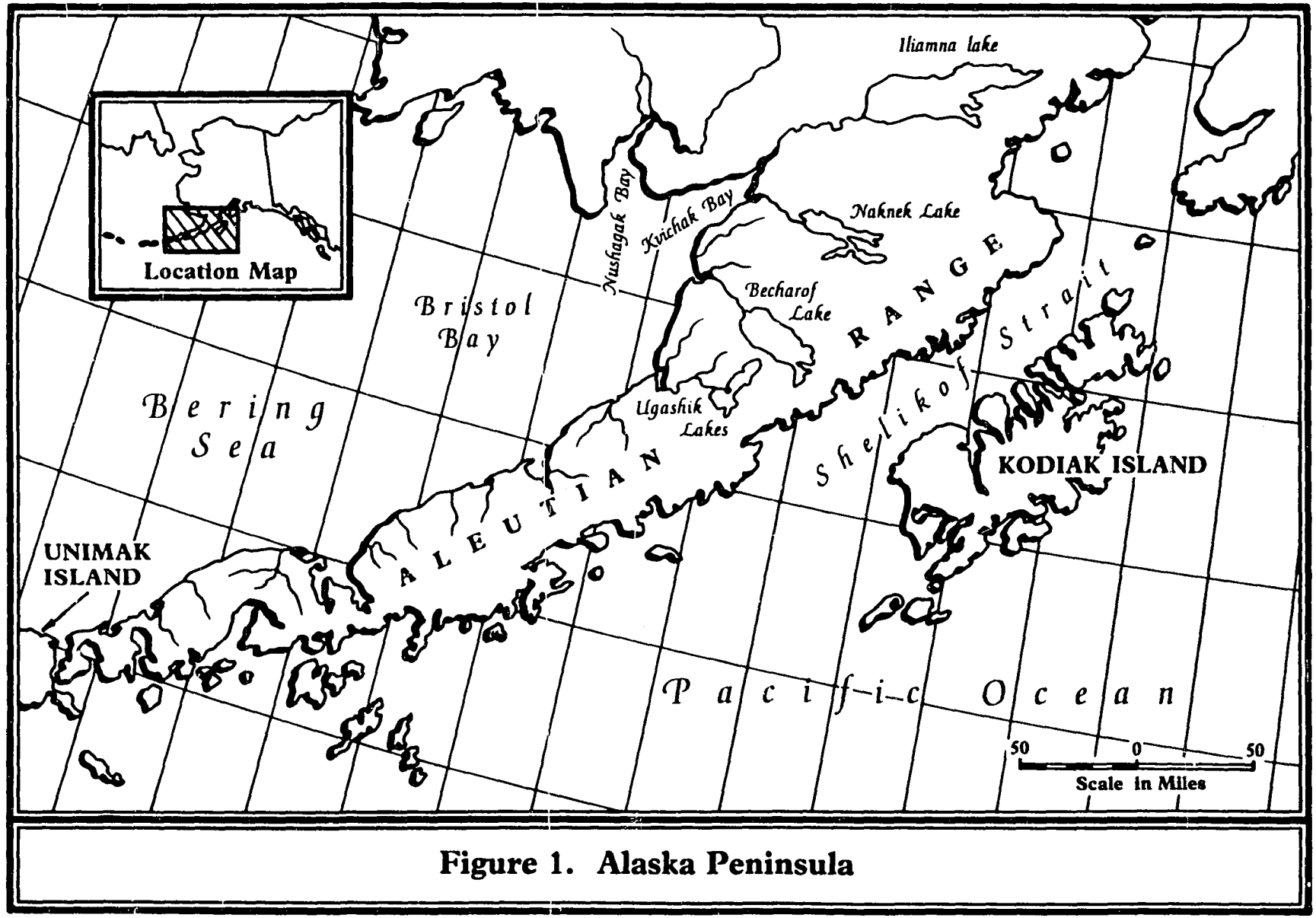

Figure 1. Alaska Peninsula

the people with abundant seals, sea lions, sea otters, orcas, and occasional baleen whales. Common land mammals include caribou and Kodiak brown bears, as well as smaller animals such as beavers, marmots, and ground squirrels. Many species of waterfowl nest in the peninsula's lakes and shores.

This area provides a unique laboratory for exploring ethnic phenomena. At the time of contact between Natives and Russians in the 18th century, the peninsula was inhabited by speakers of several different languages settled in specific territories. The area west of Port Moller and the offshore Shumagin and Sanak Islands in the Pacific were inhabited by Unangan (commonly referred to as "Aleut") speakers who shared the language of their Aleutian Islands neighbors. The far northeastern portion of the peninsula was divided among Dena'ina Athabaskans, inland Kiatagmiut (Yup'ik speakers), and another recent group of Yup'ik immigrants who called themselves Aglurmiut.[2] Enclaves in the northeastern part of the peninsula, primarily along the Pacific coast, were inhabited by speakers of a fourth language, Alutiiq. This Eskimoan language, distinct but closely related to Central Yup'ik, was also spoken by people on the Kodiak archipelago, the

[2]Often spelled "Aglegmiut" in the literature.

southernmost portion of the Kenai Peninsula, and Prince William Sound.

Although archaeological evidence indicates that immediately prior to contact the Eskimoan language speakers of the northern Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak shared a nearly identical material culture, Russian documents show that the indigenous peoples were well aware of their linguistic differences and had a sense of political and territorial distinctiveness. Nonetheless, the largest enduring (though itself ever changing) socio-political unit was not the language group but the village. Thus people identified themselves with some, but not all, of those who spoke their language.

During precontact days, there appear to have been only two firm ethnic boundaries on the Alaska Peninsula, that between the Eskimoan-speaking peoples (the ancestors of today's Yup'iks and Alutiiqs) and the Unangan speakers to the west and southwest, and that between the Eskimoan-speakers and the Dena'ina Athabaskans to the northeast. Within areas of Eskimo language use, the people probably did not perceive social borders, recognizing instead gradations of kinship with their neighbors which correlated roughly with linguistic and geographic proximity. Among precontact Eskimo speakers boundaries were fluid, individuals were mobile, and the degree of identification with others changed with changing circumstances.

The ethnic picture became more complicated after contact with Russians in the last decades of the 18th century. Beginning with the turn of the 19th century, individual Native hunters were transplanted to or from the Alaska Peninsula for Russian-American Company purposes. Whole villages changed permanent location, moving from their old winter sites to previous summer camp sites, or relocating to an entirely new area to take advantage of new economic opportunities.

The formation of the Creole class further complicated matters. Creoles were the descendents of Russians and Natives and would have been incorporated into their villages of birth and accepted as village members during precontact days. Under provisions of the second and third Russian-American Company charters, however, they were considered a separate and privileged category.

Geographical mobility and the appearance of a new ethnicity were not the only factors complicating the picture on the Alaska Peninsula after contact. Disease, religious conversion, European and American education, and economic opportunities also contributed to a change in attitudes about individual and collective ethnicity. Both ascribed and self-defined labels altered through time. Meanwhile, the people changed both their definition of "Alutiiqness" and ethnic boundaries themselves, which were

maintained, strengthened, altered, weakened, or dissolved with historical circumstances.

Nomenclature

Russian sources generally referred to the Alaska Peninsula as "Aliaksa" or "Aliaska." Similarly, Peninsula Alutiiq-speakers were usually called "Aliaksintsy" [Alaskans], but were sometimes called "Aleuty" [Aleuts] and "Kaniagi" [Koniags] as well. In this dissertation I will refrain from using the term "Aleut" except in quotations, since it is an ethnically and linguistically ambiguous designation which, both now and in the past, refers to speakers of Unangan (the language indigenous to the Aleutian Islands) and Alutiiq, as well as to pockets of Yup'ik and Dena'ina speakers. For similar reasons, where possible I will restrict my use of the term "Koniag" to the inhabitants of the Kodiak Archipelago to differentiate them from the related Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs who are the main subjects of this study.

Other names which appear in sources quoted in this work are various spellings for Native groups, such as "Aglegmiut," "Agolegmiut," or "Aglagomiut" (all refer to the Aglurmiut); "Kiatentsy" [Kiatagmiut]; and "Kenaitsy" (referring either to the Kenai Peninsula branch of Dena'ina Athabaskan-speakers or, in some sources, to all Dena'ina

Athabaskans). I will use standard modern spellings for place names (e.g., Becharof Lake, Shelikof Strait), transliteration from Russian to English for individuals' names (e.g., Bocharov, Shelikhov), and in quotations both Russian transliteration and the modern English spelling (e.g., "Kad'iak [Kodiak]").

The term "Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq" as used today refers to people whose parents and grandparents spoke the Alutiiq language and were born or raised in one of several specific villages on the Alaska Peninsula.[3] The term "Alutiiq" derives from the Eskimoization of "Aleut," a designation which 18th and 19th century Russians applied to the speakers of both Unangan and Alutiiq. As noted above, although both peoples now call themselves "Aleuts" when speaking English, to avoid confusion I here refer to Aleutian Islanders as "Unangan" and Alutiiq-speakers and their descendents as "Alutiiqs."

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[3]Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq villages, some now abandoned, have included Katmai, Kanatak, Kuyuyukak, Cold (Puale) Bay, Douglas, Wrangell, Wide Bay, Dry Bay, the Chigniks, Perryville, Ivanof Bay, Ilnik, Unangashik, Bear River, and Masriq or Meshik (Port Heiden) (Figure 2). Most residents of Mitrofania considered themselves Kodiak Alutiiqs rather than Peninsula Alutiiqs, though many married people from one of the above villages. Pilot Point, Ugashik, and Egegik are today considered "mixed villages" of both Alutiiq and Eskimo residents. Old Savonoski's ethnic affiliation is problematic (discussed in Chapter II). Port Moller is said to have been home for both Alutiiqs and *Taya'uqs* (Shumagin, Pribilof, and Aleutian Island Unangan-speakers).

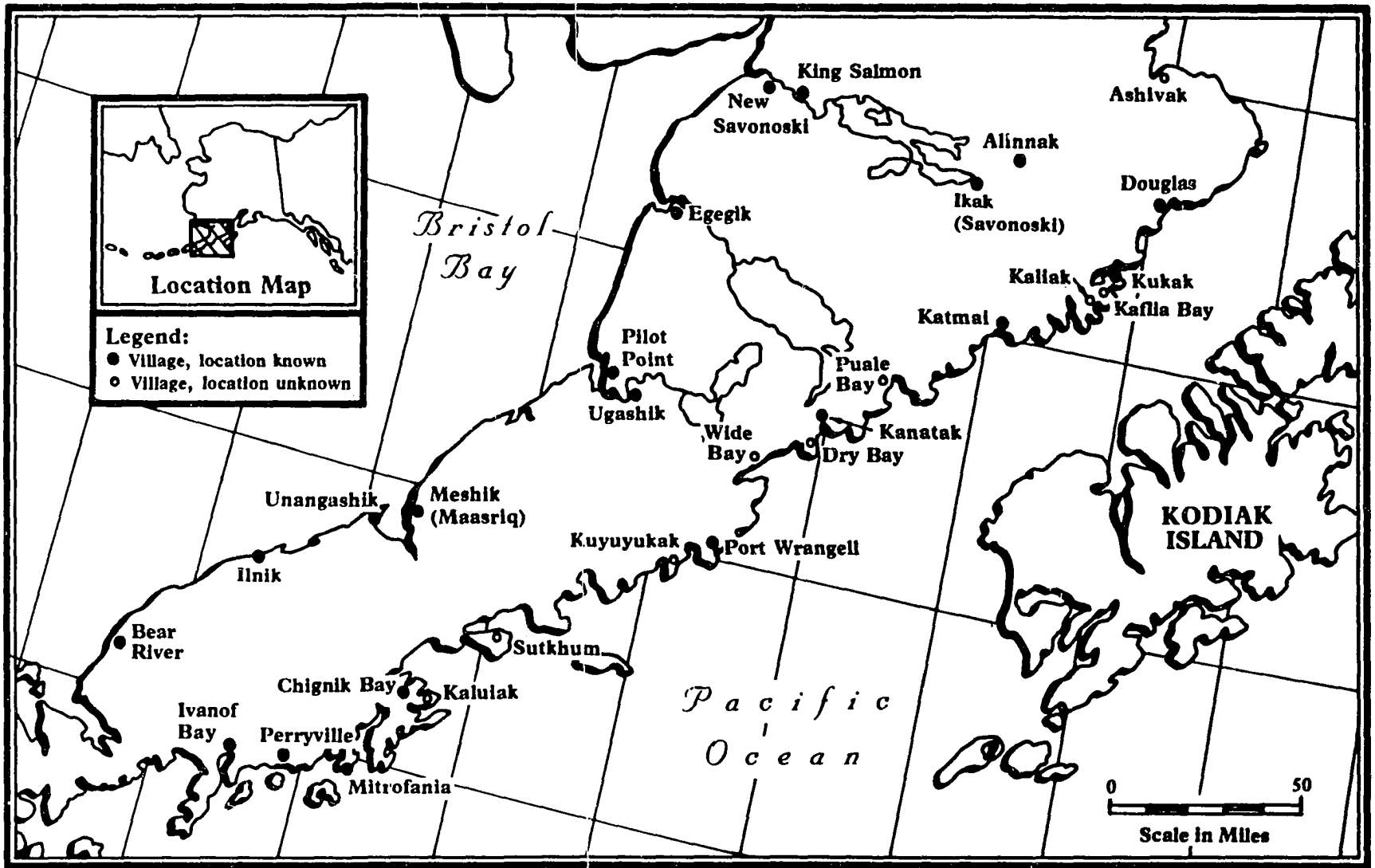

Figure 2. Communities of the Alaska Peninsula

Significance

This research contributes to three areas of anthropological endeavor: As an area study, it looks at a portion of the world which has received scant anthropological attention to date. As a folklore study, it examines as yet unrecorded lore and demonstrates the ways in which narratives reflect ethnic identity. And as an ethnicity study, it looks at a contemporary American ethnic minority, focusing on the utility of the situational model of ethnicity and examining the particular contexts which have affected Alutiiq ethnic identity through recorded history. The study melds the tools of anthropology, folklore, and history.

An Area Study

The Alaska Peninsula has been almost totally neglected by anthropologists. Scholarly research to date has been limited to the following: Beginning some 25 years after Edward Weyer's 1929 season at Port Moller (Weyer 1930), a number of archaeologists conducted surveys and excavations on the peninsula (see, for instance, McCartney 1969, 1974; G. Clark 1977; Dumond 1971, 1986, 1987, 1988; Okada 1978). In the 1970s rangers from the U.S. National Park Service recorded a few life histories (e.g., Kaiakokonok 1975a,

1975b; and Kosbruk 1975a, 1975b). U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs researchers located and conducted interviews on historic and cemetery sites as part of the land conveyances under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. The Bureau of Land Management's Mineral Management Service contracted with anthropologists for a series of brief socioeconomic community descriptions (Davis 1986). Most recently, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Division of Subsistence conducted subsistence resource studies, first in 1984 and 1985 (Morris 1987; see also Tuten 1977) and later in the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill (Fall 1990; Scarbrough 1990; Fall 1992; Fall, Hutchinson-Scarbrough and Coiley 1993).

Neither systematic ethnographic nor folklore research has been carried out. The ethnographic and historic literature on Alutiiqs in general, and the Alutiiqs of the Alaska Peninsula in particular, is meager. Russian explorers, priests, and visitors left a few brief descriptions of early life on the peninsula and a bit more on the culture of nearby Kodiak Island. Margaret Lantis (1938) described Russian, English, and French sources for the folklore and mythology of the Pacific Eskimos, but the texts collected from the Alaska Peninsula itself were fragments, and none was in Alutiiq. The Alutiiq dialect spoken on the Alaska Peninsula has been included in the more general study of the Alutiiq language conducted by

Alaska Native Language Center linguists (cf. Leer ms.). A handful of tapes has been placed in the archives of the University of Alaska's Alaska Native Language Center. The Kodiak Area Native Association has initiated a project wherein stories told mostly in English by elders on Kodiak and Afognak Islands have been tape recorded, but these recordings have not been transcribed. Thus, the Alaska Peninsula is largely *terra incognita* to anthropologists and folklorists.

The Study as Ethnohistory

Data used in this research derive from a variety of sources. These include written documents such as historical descriptions, archival records, ethnographic descriptions, previously recorded folklore texts and oral histories; contemporary episodes of folklore transmission; formal interviews; and fieldnotes from participant-observation in villages.

This is a particularly fruitful period in which to undertake ethnohistoric research. A number of historic and archival records, particularly from the Russian period, are readily available for the first time to American researchers. Moreover, indigenous Alaskans have become interested in documenting their own past and are eager to

work with researchers, adding important details to the available historic data.

Method

I performed the research for this project over a period of 32 months from May 1990 to January 1993.

Library research yielded several types of information. Archaeological reports for the Alaska Peninsula suggest precontact ethnic affinities. Records of European explorers describe a few 19th century encounters with Alutiiqs. The Russian-American Company's correspondence and other surviving records occasionally mention its two trading posts on the peninsula, and Russian explorers and visitors such as Davydov (1977), Gideon (1989), Merck (1980), Langsdorff (1968) and Lisianskii (1968) described Koniag Alutiiq culture.[4] Archives of the Russian Orthodox church yielded population data contained in confessional, baptismal, marriage, and death records (cf. ARCA).

During the American period, the last days of the fur trade were chronicled by itinerate Russian Orthodox priests whose journals of visits to Alaska Peninsula villages appeared in the church periodical, *Pravoslavnyi*

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[4]Comparisons between Kodiak and the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula are justified on linguistic, archaeological, and historic grounds, discussed in Chapter III.

Americanskii Vestnik' [American Orthodox Messenger, or AOM]. Alaska Commercial Company records and traders' diaries contain some pertinent information. The United States Bureau of the Census records, beginning in 1880, provide useful data, as do the few travel reports of American journalists who passed through the region on their way to the Yukon and Nome gold fields at the turn of this century. Particular incidents in the history of the Alaska Peninsula are documented fairly completely in archival records, examples of which are discussed in detail in Chapters IV and V.

I also undertook field research, primarily in the communities of Chignik Lake and Perryville. Local residents identify these two villages as a social and cultural subunit on the peninsula. As distinguished from neighboring Chignik Lagoon and Chignik Bay, they are ethnically homogeneous and have fairly stable populations. Unlike nearby Ivanof Bay, with a population which is made up entirely of a single extended family of the Slavic Gospel denomination (a fundamentalist evangelistic Christian church), both villages are predominantly Russian Orthodox. Most of the older residents of these two villages speak a variant of Alutiiq which they say is slightly different from that spoken on Kodiak or in the Bering Sea villages of Port Heiden, Pilot Point, or

Egegik.[5] Together Chignik Lake and Perryville approach being a "marriage universe": in more than half of the present marriages both partners are from one or the other of the villages. There is frequent visiting between the communities and people commonly share locally-obtained foods.

I conducted some additional field research in the nearby villages of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon and Ivanof Bay. I made 8 separate trips to the area, spending between 5 days and 3 weeks during each visit for a total of 82 days in the field. Visits were made in the months of January, March-April, May, June, September, October, and November. I stayed in villagers' houses as a paying guest about half the time and in rental houses or at schools for the balance. In each case my choice of residence was determined by local preference and its effect on my social status within the village. For instance, in Chignik Lagoon, Perryville and Ivanof Bay, I was invited to stay in the homes of the recognized village elders. In Chignik Lake, one of the village's prominent families offered me its rental house, situated adjacent to their family

[5]Leer reports that the Koniag Alutiiq dialect is subdivided between Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula speakers. The latter group is further divided between Perryville and the rest of the Alutiiq-speaking Peninsula population (Leer 1985:77). Perryville's distinctive sub-subdialect is characterized, for instance, by highly developed fricative devoicing (Leer 1985:93).

compound. This arrangement allowed me to take part in many of their family gatherings.

While in villages, I spent most of my time as a participant-observer, taking part in all social activities open to me as researcher, student of the Alutiiq language, visitor, guest, and eventually friend. These included church, village council meetings, *banyus* (steam baths), bingo games, berry picking, shellfish gathering, "starring" during Russian Christmas, "masking" during Russian New Year, namesday parties, hiking, riding "hondas" (three- or four-wheel all-terrain vehicles), watching television, visiting, and eating. Gender-specific roles are still fairly rigid in the communities I visited, and I was not asked to go hunting or bear watching with the men, though several shared hunting information with me. I purposely planned my visits to avoid the bulk of the summer commercial fishing season when people said they would be too busy to work with me. My field data therefore contain few first-hand observations of these two important economic and social activities, both engaged in primarily by men.

I also conducted and taped some formal interviews after I had become acquainted with villagers, usually on second or subsequent visits to the communities. Interviewees chose to record two types of information: local oral history and tradition and "traditional Alutiiq stories" (defined with greater precision in Chapter V).

Most informants preferred to record in English, though a few chose Alutiiq. Before beginning fieldwork, I had studied the Alutiiq language for two semesters at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, learning enough vocabulary to be able to carry on very simple conversations and enough grammar and phonology to transcribe simple orally produced texts. Whenever I recorded a text in Alutiiq in the field, I engaged a native speaker literate in the language to help me translate and transcribe it, receiving additional assistance from Jeff Leer, a linguist with the Alaska Native Language Center. Since most Alutiiq-speaking informants were equally comfortable in Alutiiq and English, they sometimes recorded the same story in both languages.

I was able to undertake additional field research in my home city of Anchorage, which is four hours' flying time from the peninsula villages. The largest city in Alaska and the transportation hub for other Alaskan and "Lower 48" locations, Anchorage is a common destination for Alaska Peninsula travelers. Its Alaska Native Services Hospital, the largest in the state, draws women for the births of their babies, older people with various medical problems, and men who accompany wives, children, or parents. Further, many peninsula Alutiiqs have moved to Anchorage in search of jobs. I was therefore able to conduct more than two dozen interviews and informal visits in Anchorage between trips to the peninsula.

I obtained other information for this project from anthroplogist Nancy Yaw Davis, who had recently conducted community surveys on the peninsula, from the personnel at Katmai National Monument, from the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Land Claims Division, and from the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). These individuals and organizations provided me with valuable transcripts of interviews with Alaska Peninsula residents and, in some cases, copies of the tapes themselves. The interviews concerned a range of topics from local oral history to hunting, fishing, and redistribution practices.

Validation of Findings

The events and narratives I describe here are reproduced with the permission of those who enacted or performed them, but the analyses and conclusions are my own. An important consideration in any anthropological work is the relationship between the researcher's and the subjects' analyses. The participant-observation method is predicated in part on the idea that a detailed knowledge of society, such as that held by inside practitioners, can be enriched by an outsider whose perspective casts social acts in a new, and hence noteworthy, light. Nonetheless, observations by outsiders must be validated by the insiders

and external analyses must in some way -- though not necessarily directly or literally -- resonate with analyses by insiders.

In this work I have attempted to validate conclusions in three ways. The first two were straightforward and relatively successful. First, I checked the facts themselves -- including translations and transcripts of narratives -- with the Alutiiqs who informed me. Second, I repeatedly checked my understandings of social phenomena with my hosts. For instance, when I observed that people seemed to treat *krasnas* [godparents] like parents, I asked several individuals how alike the two statuses were. When I noted the importance of reference to the land in narratives and conversations by both urban and rural residents, I began asking people what the land meant to them. When I felt I had uncovered an important ethnic symbol (e.g., the Alutiiq language), I asked people to talk about that symbol, thereby disclosing the situations in which people consider it important, diagnostically Alutiiq, or changing. Similarly, I believed I saw in the Christmas and New Year's rituals a tie with precontact culture and religious practice. I needed to learn to what extent that tie was important -- or even acknowledged -- by the people themselves. I told people of parallels I saw between ancient and contemporary practices. Some individuals denied that the Christmas holiday referred to anything but

a commemoration of Christ's birth, but most expressed interest in what they perceived to be a newly opened door to the Alutiiq past.

A third, less successful effort to validate my conclusions involved sending portions of this dissertation to community members for their comments. After several weeks had elapsed, I spoke with recipients, asking whether they had read the work and whether they agreed with my conclusions. For the most part, people had not read entire chapters. They had skipped the sections on analysis and concentrated instead on descriptive portions. People were far more interested in *what* I had learned than in *why* I thought the information was important or relevant to a larger audience. In this orientation they seem to echo the observed Yup'ik "negative valuation of analysis and specification," valuing multiple individual perspectives over theory (cf. Morrow 1990:154).

The Researcher

Every researcher enters the field with biases or perspectives which affect both the observation and analysis of her data. Further, the researcher's personal characteristics affect the type and depth of information local people are willing to share. Although I do not know precisely how Alaska Peninsula villagers viewed me, I will

offer the following background in the hopes that it assists the reader in detecting relevant personal orientations.

Although not raised in Alaska, I have spent my entire adult life here, living 3 years in Juneau and 19 in Anchorage. This fact was important in villagers' initial reactions to me, for I was something of an insider who personally knew friends and relatives of my hosts.

Before moving to Alaska, I had earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in Anthropology from universities in the Lower 48. Once in the state, I worked for 19 years for Alaska Native educational organizations as a Native studies curriculum designer, 13 of them within the Anchorage School District. I traveled throughout the state, though never to the Alaska Peninsula, working in schools as a staff trainer on Native cultural topics. This fact provided me with a ready entrée to the village schools and staff.

I had taught a class in Alaska Native Literature at an Anchorage high school shortly before returning to graduate school in 1989. Three of the students in the class were Alutiiqs, one whose family had moved to Anchorage from Chignik Lake. These students had piqued my interest in the Alutiiq region of the state, for in searching for published narratives from their culture, I discovered that there were almost none. I was determined to find more.

I thus entered this project from the perspective of an anthropologist who had worked within a large statewide

network of anthropologists, Alaska Natives, and educators. My career had been committed to exposing young people and their teachers to Alaska Native cultural information and to presenting the information accurately and engagingly. My interests tended toward the public domain of shared lore.

Unconscious biases undoubtedly derive from my sex (female), ethnicity (Anglo-American), age (early 40s), family situation (married with two adolescent children), background (child of a military family), hometown (none, or many, depending on point of view), and education (public schools, liberal arts colleges). In the following chapter I discuss those characteristics which I was aware affected the information I obtained. I leave the judgment of the impact of other more subtle personal factors to the reader.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL MODELS

I have approached both my topic -- Alutiiq ethnicity -- and my method -- folkloric and ethnohistoric research -- from particular points of view. In this chapter I explain my theoretical bases and situate this work within each field.

Ethnicity

Anthropological Models in Complex Societies

As anthropologists turned their attentions from small-scale groups toward complex societies in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, they saw a world made up not of bounded, self-sufficient and isolated societies, but of relatively separate self-defined peoples (which social scientists termed "ethnic groups") who participated in larger economic or political systems and regularly interacted with each other within the context of the overarching societies. In probing complex society, anthropologists had discovered ethnicity.

In the 1940s and 1950s British social anthropologists had already recognized that the small-scale societies they

studied were not the bounded and complete wholes depicted in the ethnographic corpus. Radcliffe-Brown, in his Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1940, spoke of

> a difficulty which I do not think that sociologists have really faced, the difficulty of defining what is meant by the term "a society." They do commonly talk of societies as if they were distinguishable, discrete entities, as, for example, when we are told that a society is an organism (1965:193).

Radcliffe-Brown's recognition of the model's limitations had little immediate effect on anthropologists' work. Even those who worked in complex societies at first continued the anthropological tradition of concentrating on expressions of solidarity and integration within small, well-defined subsets within the larger societies, ignoring social relationships which reached outside the units of observation or which linked different groups to each other. Even in concentrating on the moments of interethnic activity, Barth (1969) interpreted ethnic interaction as a meeting between distinct, discrete, and stable ethnic "groups." He and others sought to identify mechanisms which maintained and strengthened the boundaries, dismissing individuals' movements across boundaries, fluctuations in boundary strength, and fluidity in ethnic

ascriptions as abnormal or unimportant variations on ethnic themes.

An important new direction in ethnicity studies dates to the late 1960s, influenced by the earlier work of Firth (1951), Barnett (1953), and Leach (1954). Firth had contended that anthropological theory must make room for "variance and for the explanation of variance. . . . [I]n the aspect of organization is to be found the variation or change principle -- by allowing evaluation of situations and entry of individual choice" (1951:40). Barnett, in his seminal *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*, maintained that the individual, not the society, causes change through his needs and desires and that anthropologists should look for the social conditions under which he will act on his feelings (Barnett 1953:98, 378ff). Dovetailing with this emphasis on the individual, Leach maintained that the anthropologist's job was to record, not the life of the average informant (who did not exist), but the relationship between the real and ideal behaviors of individuals (1954:292). He also noted the power of personal motivation in social movements and explored shifting social boundaries and changes in self-ascription.

Firth's student Frederik Barth synthesized these theoretical perspectives with field research in the study of ethnic groups (1969). At the same time McFee (1968) diverged from the study of intergroup dynamics in

emphasizing individual choice and cultural heterogeneity within ethnic minorities undergoing cultural change. He objected to a mechanistic view which portrayed people as "cultural containers" who could only hold a finite amount of culture, as if the addition of an element of European culture necessitated the shedding of an element of Native American culture. Instead, McFee (1968) found that individuals were able to learn and compartmentalize a wide repertoire of behaviors and choose ethnically appropriate actions when called upon to do so.[6]

With an emphasis on cultural change and individual variation has come a shift in the way anthropologists understand ethnicity. Most no longer speak of ethnic groups. They conceive their task to be a study of the situations in which expressions of individual or collective identity are made manifest. They assert that: (1) even among those who consider themselves of a particular ethnicity, people differ in the strength of their ethnic feelings; (2) a person's sense of ethnic identity may undergo a number of shifts in direction and emphasis throughout his lifetime; (3) ethnicity does not exert a

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[6]O'Brien (1986; discussing Worsley 1984) cautions that personal choice goes only so far in explaining an individual's ethnic identity, for choice invariably operates within a situation of inequality and power relations which "[restrict] the field of choice and ultimately [shape] the larger cultural constellation" (1986:899).

uniform pressure in all aspects of social life; it becomes more or less an issue, depending on the situation; (4) different people understand the symbols with which they represent their ethnicity in different ways; and (5) in a modern complex society, it is effectively impossible to identify a discrete, bounded group which constitutes a given ethnicity (with the possible exception of peoples localized in an ancestral territory). The view currently prevalent, followed in this research, holds that ethnic phenomena are dependent on historic, social, and cultural contexts and readily susceptible to alteration (cf. Hicks 1977:16; Cohen 1978:386; Clifford 1988).

Terminology

The concepts of ethnic group, ethnic identity, ethnicity, and "peoples" have been refined and redefined in the last three decades. Edward Spicer and his followers advocate use of the term "a people" rather than "ethnic group" or "ethnicity" (Spicer 1980, Castile and Kushner 1981). They consider "ethnicity" to be bound up with issues of the individual psychological processes of enculturation and acculturation and too little concerned with behavior and group processes.

In this work I use the terms "a people," "ethnicity," and occasionally "a collectivity." This last term denotes

an indefinite degree of commonality. The term "a people" refers to those who consciously consider themselves to be of the same ethnicity. An "ethnicity" is a complex of ideas, symbols, values, and behaviors around which peoples rally and with which they identify. I reject the term "ethnic group" for its image of a bounded, finite, stable, and identifiable aggregate of people.

"Ethnic identity," as I use it in this work, is not a superorganic "collective identity" but rather the "phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society" (Berger and Luckmann 1967:174). Individuals take on an ethnic identity through socialization with significant others within a particular ethnic context. Sociologists Berger and Luckmann describe the process thus:

> In other words, the self is a reflected entity, reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others toward it; the individual becomes what he is addressed as by his significant others. This is not a one-sided, mechanistic process. It entails a dialectic between identification by others and self-identification, between objectively assigned and subjectively appropriated identity. The dialectic . . . is present each moment the individual *identifies with* his significant others (Berger and Luckmann 1967:132; emphasis in the original).

Ethnic identity is therefore internalized in the individual but held in common among all of a given ethnicity.

Ethnic Characteristics

Although anthropologists have looked at ethnicity from different perspectives, the following points of reference appear in all contemporary descriptions of the phenomenon:

Perception of Common Origin; Claim to Continuity with the Past; Self Ascription. Shared ethnicity demands a perception of common origin, continuity, and current commonality with "co-ethnics" of the past and present. Ethnic identification also entails a subjective process wherein a person comes to perceive himself to be of a particular ethnicity. This process should not be confused with the conferring of ethnic labels by colonial powers upon the colonized peoples, the ascription of labels by outsiders, or the reification of identity types (Cohen 1978:383; Hicks 1977:2; Berger and Luckmann 1967:91).

In this study I am particularly interested in documenting claims on the part of contemporary Pacific coast Alaska Peninsula inhabitants to continuity with an Alutiiq past and to contemporary co-membership. I examine the historic record for evidence of the emergence of a sense of Alutiiq ethnicity, and isolate from the continuous reshaping of folklore and oral tradition the strategies involved in the maintenance of this ethnic identification.

Social and Cultural Distinctiveness. Anthropologists agree that those who share a particular ethnic identity exhibit some cultural and social distinctiveness (Hicks 1977:2). They do not agree on how distinctive ethnicities are from the overarching society. There is also widespread disagreement on the relative importance of cultural (operating through symbols, norms, and beliefs) as opposed to social (operating at and becoming manifest through behavior) elements in ethnicity formation and maintenance.

For instance, Barth (1969) maintains that distinctions between ethnic groups are primarily social, requiring different procedural rules for interactions with outsiders, but not widespread cultural disagreement across boundaries. He states,

> The important thing to recognize is that a drastic reduction of cultural differences between ethnic groups does not correlate in any simple way with a reduction in the organizational relevance of ethnic identities, or a breakdown in boundary-maintaining processes (Barth 1969:32-3).

The inverse of this principle is contained in Fernandez's (1965) study of the degree of consensus in sign and symbol in a religious cult in Gabon. He found,

> Paradoxically a high degree of social integration in the sense of agreement about signals and signs and smooth coordination of interaction does not necessarily imply a high degree of cultural consensus. In fact, the more

> perfectly coordinated social interaction should be the greater opportunity there may be for variable interpretations of that activity and hence lack of cultural consensus (Fernandez 1965:922).

Although Fernandez's statement referred not to ethnicity but to ritual behavior, his findings suggest that scholars need to examine, rather than take for granted, the relationship between cultural and social consensus within any social entity.

DeVos, on the other hand, emphasizes cultural homogeneity within the ethnic minority. He asserts that the symbolic dimension of ethnicity is apparent in rules of comportment which imply a moral commitment to a set of beliefs and values. In these rules, beliefs, and values reside the primary essence of ethnicity (in DeVos and Romanucci-Ross 1982:366, 368). DeVos's conception is similar to Goodenough's concept of culture as individual variation within the context of shared standards (Goodenough 1981:62). In contrast, McFee (1968) found a wide range of cultural variability among modern Blackfeet tribal members.

Hensel (1992) follows a behavioral model closer to Barth's in his study of Central Yup'ik ethnicity. He suggests that the Yup'ik view of categories (symbolic constructions) as "inherently flexible and indeterminate" applies to attitudes about ethnicity as well, and contends

that Yup'iks view phenomena not according to taxonomic labels but according to performance. Thus the more a person "acts like" a Yup'ik, the closer he or she is to being identified as a Yup'ik (Hensel 1992:116-7). I argue here that Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs also place great importance on "acting like an Alutiiq" but understand that this behavior must exist *within the symbolic prerequisites* for Alutiiqness. That is, Alutiiq-like behavior is not sufficient to make one an Alutiiq. Alutiiqness is based on both perceived inherent characteristics and appropriate behavior.

Hicks stressed the dynamics and flexibility of social/behavioral and cultural elements in his contention that ethnic "boundaries are composed of symbolic distinctions and, with each interaction, are created, affirmed, or denied" (1977:17). The process of ethnic manipulation stands out clearly in disagreements and negotiations over the symbolic dimensions of Alutiiqness. For instance, until recently a universally accepted part of being an Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq was membership in the Russian Orthodox church. Since the 1960s, this particular "symbolic distinction" has been challenged, for a number of people who maintain that they are Alutiiqs have left the Orthodox church and now adhere to an evangelical faith. As a result, the boundaries of Alutiiqness are being

renegotiated. I discuss the process through which this and similar symbolic changes occur in the following chapters.

A useful concept which combines the social and cultural spheres is Spicer's "identity configuration." A set of symbols which defines a given ethnicity, a people's "identity configuration" *must* change with changing circumstances if ethnic identity itself is to persist. Spicer suggests,

> Symbols shift in identity configurations as the interests of the people concerned change. . . . At any given time an identity configuration is characterized by intensifying or waning sentiments regarding the symbolic content of the system. . . . Even though a people is characterized by long continuity, that does not mean that its identity system goes on unchanged for that long period. On the contrary, it is more likely that a people sustains continuity just because its identity system is responsive to the changing conditions to which the people must adapt (1980:314-5).

This proposition is especially applicable to the Alaska Peninsula, where the Alutiiqs' known prehistory and history have been characterized by frequent intercultural communication and adaptation.

I view the social and cultural elements of ethnic identification as distinct but interrelated, involving a dialectic process (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1967). The cultural dimension is illustrated in the fact that those who share an ethnicity perceive that they also share a

common worldview and that they express their ethnicity through a common set of symbols. Cultural agreement need not be complete, however. As long as certain external behaviors are followed (for instance, adequate respect is shown toward recognized ethnic symbols), variation in beliefs and values is both accepted and expected. I found this among Alutiiqs, as had Cohen and others (1986) in the expression of ethnic boundaries in the United Kingdom:

> These boundaries are mental constructs which condense symbolically their bearers' social theories of similarity and difference. . . . Their symbolic character enables their forms to be held in common while also enabling individuals to attribute different meanings to them (1986:17).

Elsewhere Cohen states, "*differences* of meaning are the norm, even though they may be masked by the *appearance* of convergence" (1986:12; emphasis in the original).

The sharing of an ethnic identity also demands some amount of distinctive interaction or communication (the social dimension). Interactions between ethnic sharers may be of a distinct type, possible only among those who share the ethnic identity and know the unspoken interactional rules. Intraethnic interactions may be more frequent than those which are interethnic, although this is not necessarily the case. Peoples in diaspora (e.g., Jews in the past and to some extent in the present) may maintain a

fairly unified ethnic distinctiveness, despite the geographical distances that separate them, through common adherence to religious rules and understandings and a periodic affirmation that others are similarly engaged. So too Alutiiqs who no longer live on the Alaska Peninsula are considered and consider themselves to be Alutiiq, although their Alutiiqness comes into play in different circumstances than among their peninsula relatives.

I consider the most interesting questions about the nature of ethnicity to be not the degree of cultural agreement or disagreement among those who consider themselves Alutiiqs,[7] but the problems of how and when people enact or describe Alutiiq ethnicity and how an Alutiiq identity configuration has taken shape through time.

Ethnicity as an Interactive Process. Ethnicity is most evident -- I follow others in saying it is *only* relevant -- in the arena of relationships between societal segments. For instance, Barth (1969) suggested that an (often economic) interdependence of ethnic groups is necessary for interethnic relationships (which he viewed as dichotomized interactions), as well as for relationships

[7]Various anthropologists have focused on this point. See, for instance, Fernandez 1965 and Fowler 1987.

within ethnicities. In other words, there are no "ethnic groups" without other "ethnic groups" (cf. Cohen 1978:389).

Spicer, quoted above, has been influential in the formulation of ethnicity theory. He suggested that the phenomenon of enclavement is a frequent result of the interaction between a minority people and the larger society. Enclavement then structures the relationship between them:

> What I mean by a cultural enclave is a part of a political society which maintains distinctive cultural traits from the members of the larger whole and which places positive value on the maintenance of these differences (Spicer 1966:267).

Spicer describes an enclave as

> always a sub-society, never a segment of a society. The society of an enclave is a culture-bearing unit, not merely a group of occupational specialists or co-religionists. We are speaking of a whole cultural system when we speak of the culture of an enclave, not a set of special ties within a cultural system (1966:269).

Here Spicer refers to both social and cultural distinctiveness, but returns to traditional anthropological models of "ethnic groups" as self-sufficient, tightly-integrated, bounded wholes. In so doing, he limits the model's usefulness by blurring the distinction between the concepts of ethnicity and culture and inadequately

distinguishing the phenomenon of ethnicity from other segmentary processes.

A more useful model for my purposes concentrates on the moments and circumstances during which ethnicity comes into focus -- a situational approach. Such situations occur often, but not always, when peoples of different ethnicities interact within the same social system. Hicks suggests that the situations in which interethnic interactions occur should be studied to determine when ethnic identity is relevant (Hicks 1977:16). McFee (1968), Cohen (1978), Clifford (1988), and others similarly stress the "conditions [that] tend to evoke ethnic identities of particular scale and intensity [rather] than . . . what ethnicity is as a phenomenon" (Cohen 1978:395).

One example of a situation which benefits from such an approach is the Christmas-time activity of starring in Chignik Lake (discussed in Chapter VI). Although starring as practiced there is a distinctively Alutiiq activity, it is not ethnically bounded. Non-Alutiiqs are welcomed rather than excluded. The analysis of starring must therefore begin not from the perspective of its exclusion of outsiders (the enclave view) or its function as a boundary-maintaining activity (though these factors should be considered), but from the perspective of why starring is defined as singularly Alutiiq, and in what way Alutiiqness is expressed through the activity.

Ethnic Distinctiveness. Castile (1981) provides a useful list of elements often associated with ethnic minorities which distinguish them from the overarching society. These include a homeland (past, future, or present, though the people may not live there; it may serve as a symbolic and unrealized goal); a language (which may be little used in daily life); an identity configuration (as defined by Spicer in his work among the Yaquis of Mexico); voluntary or involuntary enclavement; economic specialization; and specific rituals and/or symbols which accentuate and perpetuate ethnic distinctiveness (Castile 1981:xvii-xx). In the following chapters I discuss how each of these items in some way figures in the enactment of Alutiiq ethnicity.

Ethnicity as Class. Some anthropologists conceptualize ethnicity as a special case of social stratification. They focus on areas of ethnic overlap or boundary as Barth and other early theorists did, but postulate that a necessarily unequal power relationship obtains in all interethnic relationships (Cohen 1978:391). Specifically, ethnic minorities within nation states are seen as being disadvantaged. Neo-Marxist Richard Thompson claims that "ethnic processes in the underdeveloped world have been relatively *recent* historical creations of

colonialism and imperialism" (1989:107; emphasis in the original). In other words, he claims that ethnic differentiation does not occur in regions which have not experienced domination by outside powers, nor did they occur before the modern era.

At first glance, this postulate appears applicable to the situation on the Alaska Peninsula. In the following chapter I suggest that a distinctively *Alutiiq* ethnicity only became relevant after the Russians arrived and imposed a new economic and religious system on the area. However, I also discuss factors other than economic exploitation, including situations predating contact, which contributed to ethnic distinctiveness on the Alaska Peninsula.

Studies which concentrate on differential status and power are pertinent to Alutiiqs insofar as they are a demographic minority in the state of Alaska, and rural Alaska is relatively impoverished compared with urban parts of the state. Nonetheless, to view contemporary Alutiiq ethnicity primarily as an instance of social stratification is to to ignore Alutiiqs' pre- and postcontact relationships with other Natives on the peninsula and to misunderstand their historic economic and demographic position *vis à vis* the larger society (which in this case comprises Alaska as a whole and the political, social, and economic entities of which it is or has been a part).

Today Alutiiqs are an overwhelming demographic majority in Perryville and Chignik Lake and, until recent innovations in mass communication, they experienced relative cultural isolation and hence a large degree of autonomy because of their distance from the seats of non-Native power. Furthermore, during the last quarter of the 20th century they have enjoyed relative wealth (though not the power which accompanies ownership) from the commercial fishing industry.

On the other hand, in most interactions with non-Natives, for example in the domains of education and law, the power relationship between Alutiiqs and non-Natives has been pronouncedly unequal. The consequences of unequal power relationships are reflected in the region's folklore in stories consisting of meetings between clever Alutiiqs and powerful but stupid white men. These stories are similar to the lore of other minority or marginal groups, and are considered in Chapter VII (cf. Gmelch 1986 on clever travelling people).

Folklore

Theory and Method

Two distinct scholarly strains have shaped the field of folklore, the literary and the anthropological (cf.

Zumwalt 1988). In merging a study of the folklore text (a concentration on what is said and how it is expressed) with the context within which the text is transmitted (where, when and why it is said, who said it to whom, and what encoded cultural messages it contains), most contemporary folklorists recognize the influence of both strains. Both are relevant to this research which considers genre and symbol analysis while situating contemporary folklore performances within an historic and cultural context.

In recent years a new concept of the "folk" has emerged. Just as many anthropologists have replaced the concept of "ethnic group" with the more fluid "people," so folklorists have recognized the situational nature of folk entities. They have found that the folk who share lore do not necessarily comprise a corporate, bounded, and structured group but may perhaps consist merely of the universe of those interested in a certain topic who are knowledgeable of the traditions and means of transmission (cf. Dundes 1965:2; 1980:1-19; "communicative competence" from Hymes 1971). They have also noted that a person may identify himself as part of one group in one instance and as part of a completely different one at another time.

Conceptions of the lore have also changed. Elliott Oring (1986) rejects the genre checklists which used to define the discipline's subject matter, suggesting instead that folklore is understood in contemporary scholarship to

revolve around several key orientations. He maintains that folklore is generally understood to concern what is communal, common, informal, marginal (in relation to spheres of power and privilege), personal (face-to-face communication), traditional, aesthetic, and ideological (expressions of belief and systems of knowledge) (1986:17-18).

Other folklorists consider this characterization of the lore unproductive, arguing that it reifies everchanging, situationally-determined performances. Instead they focus on the process and contexts of folklore transmission. This shift reflects an anthropological influence, beginning with Goodenough's emphasis on cultural competence (originally formulated in 1963, restated in Goodenough 1981:62, 99). Hymes (1971) extended Goodenough's concept and Chomsky's "linguistic competence" (1968) to the notion of communicative competence, which within a given tradition entails a set of unspoken but learned rules governing verbal and nonverbal communication in all potential situations. These rules may be so ethnically specific that knowledge of them indicates and is a prerequisite to membership.[8]

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[8]Several studies dealing with these underlying rules, which are one part of what are termed "metanarrative elements," are collected in a volume edited by Ben-Amos and Goldstein (1975).

Hymes's work in sociolinguistics inspired a new branch of folklore analysis, ethnopoetics, which investigates the way narrators structure their performances to achieve desired emotional effects and communicate important information. For example, Hymes (1981), Tedlock (1983), and Woodbury (1987) search for the implied meanings in oral performance, and then seek to represent the performance on paper in a way that maintains as much of this information as possible in the transfer from an oral to a written medium. By way of example, Tedlock transcribed a speech in which he had explained,

> The MEANING of SPOKEN narrative
> is not only carried by the sheer words as
> transcribed by alphabetic writing
> but by the placement of SILENCES
> by TONES of VOICE
> by whispers and SHOUTS (arrangement as in the
> original; 1983:113).

Others (eg., Fine 1984) have devised even more detailed notation systems to indicate body movements, stress patterns, and pause lengths in the original performance.

Like the sociolinguists, Briggs (1988) is interested in textural or stylistic characteristics of presentation and the competence needed to produce an acceptable performance. He is especially concerned that performance be viewed as a conceptual whole rather than as text proclaimed within context. Briggs found in his study of

Spanish-language folklore of northern New Mexico that texts did not -- *could* not -- exist apart from particular contexts that gave rise to them. He further maintains that an ethnopoetic or performance approach reveals the complex nature of performers' artistry as they react to and create context:

> performers are not passive, unreflecting creatures who simply respond to the dictates of tradition or the physical and social environment. They interpret both traditions and social settings, actively transforming both in the course of their performances (Briggs 1988:7).

Briggs complains that too often "context" is considered a pre-existing condition to a performance, whereas he has observed, with Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1976), that context is "created by the participants in the course of the interaction" (1988:15). In fact, context may change often during a single conversation or performance. For example, in the Alutiiq story *Pugla'allria* (Chapter V), storyteller Ignatius Kosbruk spoke to different concerns in different parts of the story. At times he contextualized the tale as an example of the richness of traditional Alutiiq culture and folklore. At other times during his performance he treated the story as a lesson to Alutiiqs who recently left the Orthodox church. Thus, although *Pulaa'allria's* physical and temporal context did not

change, the story's symbolic context was consciously manipulated throughout the performance.

A performance approach to folklore, of which Briggs provides an example, is thus based on the contention that "the essence of oral literature, including its artfulness, is not to be discovered in folklore texts as conventionally conceived, but in lived performances" (Bauman 1986:8). Bauman and Briggs (1990) explain the conventional understanding of performance:

> As the concept of performance has been developed in linguistic anthropology, performance is seen as a specially marked, artful way of speaking that sets up or represents a special interpretive frame within which the act of speaking is to be understood (1990:73).

Within this theoretical school Bauman (1986) emphasizes the *emergent* quality of performance, which was first demonstrated by Alfred Lord (1960) in his study of Yugoslavian epic poetry. Bauman states,

> Every performance will have a unique and emergent aspect, depending on the distinctive circumstances at play within it. Events in these terms are not frozen, predetermined molds for performance but are themselves situated social accomplishments in which structures and conventions may provide precedents and guidelines for the range of alternatives possible, but the possibility of alternatives, the competencies and goals of the participants, and the emergent unfolding of the event make for variability (1986:4).

Bauman and others use the idea of emergence to describe folklore performance, but the concept is also appropriate to the expression of ethnicity. Hicks (1977) noted that the symbolic boundaries of an ethnicity are expressed and reformulated through actions and speech, emerging anew with each expression. Like performance, ethnicity is continually in process.

In this study I adopt a modified processual approach in analyzing Alutiiq lore. In common with sociolinguists I recognize that much information is encoded in the style of presentation. Like Briggs and Bauman, I hold that a given folklore performance should be analyzed not merely in terms of its historical or cultural setting, but also as a relationship between orator and audience which results in a fluid, ever-emerging experience.

From a theoretical standpoint, my method breaks with folklorists and sociolinguists who hold that text and context cannot be separated for purposes of analysis. One danger of refusing to admit text as a separate entity is that the story itself -- its plot, characters, and theme -- which does exist as an (often) named entity in the minds of the storytellers, can be lost in favor of style and process (cf. Finnegan 1992:45). Furthermore, there are many instances when the two have been or must be separated. For example, when the only surviving record of a performance done long ago is an audiotape or transcript of an interview

(see, for instance, the discussion of the Katmai story in Chapter IV), the researcher must learn everything possible from that fragment. The information available consists, first, in the words themselves and, in fortunate circumstances, their intonation; second, in minimal information on the immediate setting in which the recording was made (i.e., date, location, list of people present); and third, information obtained elsewhere which gives clues to the historic or cultural concerns of performer and audience at the time of the recording. Text and context are conceptually and actually separated from each other in this situation; the former is explicit while the latter must be inferred.

This being said, I nonetheless recognize the dangers in treating a text as if it has

> some kind of continuance in its own right, outside of temporal constraints, existing almost in a spatial way over and above the specific conditions in which it from time to time is read or delivered (Finnegan 1992:18).

Analysis of ethnohistorical data yields fruit only when text and context are both considered in as unified a manner as the evidence allows. At the very least, as Finnegan suggests, the contexts in which older texts are referenced by today's Alutiiqs must be considered.

Finally, I agree that the people who share the lore (the "folk") need not constitute a bounded and structured group. However, a study of any lore's transmission reveals who is considered an insider in a given situation, highlights situations when co-membership is important, and illuminates mechanisms promoting social solidarity, integration, and distinctiveness. Concomitantly, a study of the transmission of folklore indicates that some people are excluded from the sharing in some circumstances, that there is variation among versions of a single narrative or ritual, and that there is disagreement about which tradition-bearers are the most appropriate spokespeople for the community.

The Individual Tradition-bearer

Statements about ethnicity, whether explicit or implicit, emanate from individuals. Each story which forms part of the data for this study was transmitted by *an* Alutiiq, not by "the Alutiiqs."

Alutiiq storytellers are careful to describe only what they believe to be true, either from personal observation and experience or from validated testimony by others. They scrupulously present the message *as they remember it* to have been transmitted to them. But each storyteller chooses particular stories to tell from among those she has

heard and tells them in a particular way. Russian folklorists of the early 20th century documented the phenomenon of individual variation among tradition-bearers. They found that social status, individual interests and life experiences had an important effect on performance and text (Oinas 1971:ix). Since then many folklorists have studied the variability in folklore transmission, noting particularly the differences between specialists and non-specialists (cf. Siikala 1990).

In this study I am not concerned with individual variation *per sé* (partially because so few stories were told me by more than one person, as discussed below), but I do compare statements from different informants to determine areas of consensus in the collective Alutiiq identity configuration.

An example illustrates the usefulness of this approach. Several informants in one community mentioned a particular person, now deceased, as a role model whose example should guide today's youth. I began asking others if they could tell me anything about this person. One woman at first agreed neutrally that the individual in question had been an important factor in the community and had provided an example that was followed. Later, she told me in confidence that she had suffered a personal betrayal at that person's hand and so could not be more

enthusiastic. She asked me not to divulge the particular circumstances of the betrayal.

This informant was unwilling to dispute the claims of others openly and did not wish to sully an established reputation. In refusing to do so, she demonstrated folklorist Edward Ives' point that the folkloric hero, which this person had become, is distinct from the actual person whose acts and character gave rise to his characterization (1988:12). She also confirmed the stories I had heard as an accepted collective statement about the exemplary value of the person's life.

Folklore as a Window to Ethnicity

Folklore is an especially appropriate tool for the researcher interested in ethnicity. Both folklore and ethnicity are dependent in part on symbolic expressions -- the one through metaphor and analogy, the other through boundary markers -- and on at least minimal common understandings of the meanings of those expressions. Both are relevant only when enacted in particular situations. Both are in an important sense emergent -- dependent on continual restatement and amenable to alteration based on those restatements. In fact, folklore is often the vehicle through which ethnic statements are made.

Folklorists have long concentrated on the lore of ethnic minorities, studying in particular the integrative and exclusionary functions which the lore can serve. Stern (1991) notes,

> Ethnic folklore . . . reflects an entire range of ethnic issues, from the preservation of ethnic communities to the formulation of ethnic identities to the development of ethnic values (1991:xi).

In highlighting a people's history and traditions the lore serves as a vehicle through which ethnic distinctiveness is communicated and continuity with the past is maintained. The lore contains explicit references to important symbols. It can serve as a marker of ethnic boundaries in its contents (certain information being ethnically specific), its accepted mode of transmission (communication conventions being ethnically specific), and its audience (certain information being communicated only to certain others). It can also indicate interethnic links through borrowing and adaptation. I draw upon all these dimensions in my analyses of the stories I was told and rituals I observed.

Ethnic Symbols

Symbols in folklore may serve to remind people how to behave, where they came from, and what values they should live by. Anthony Cohen notes the wide range of potentially important ethnic symbols:

> Since boundaries are inherently oppositional, almost any matter of perceived difference between a community and the outside world can be rendered symbolically as a resource of its boundary. . . . Members of a community can make virtually anything grist to the symbolic mill of cultural distance, whether it be the effects upon it of some centrally formulated government policy, or matters of dialect, dress, drinking, marrying or dying . . . . The symbolic nature of opposition means that people can "think themselves into difference". The boundaries consist essentially in the contrivance of distinctive meanings within the community's social discourse. People construct their community symbolically, making it a resource and a repository of meaning (1986:17).

Examples of ethnically oriented symbols abound in Alutiiq folklore, serving to represent through the shorthand of character identification, location, or event important messages about Alutiiq history and identity. For instance, several stock characters exemplify Alutiiq virtues. One, the "clever Alutiiq," outsmarts outsiders. Another, a "righteous Alutiiq," survives disasters through proper adherence to ritual forms. A third, the "successful hunter," knows the terrain and animals intimately through

proper training, ritual, observation, and experience. As examples of success emanating from Alutiiqness, these characters serve to differentiate Alutiiqs from non-Alutiiqs, thus pointing to perceived ethnic boundaries. They are part of the identity configuration, "a set of meanings about actual events of history, as uniquely experienced by the people and stored as it were in a stock of symbols" (Spicer 1980:347). Places (e.g., Katmai; see Chapter IV) and events (e.g., the Katmai eruption) also take on symbolic importance in the lore.

In *The Forest of Symbols* (1967), Victor Turner provided a methodology for analyzing collective symbols in ritual performance. His method is useful in understanding the Chignik Lake starring and masking rituals (discussed in Chapter VI). Turner recognized that symbols are neither unanimously understood nor do they represent single things or ideas. He suggested that a symbol's meaning is expressed at three distinct levels: "(1) the level of indigenous interpretation (or, briefly, the exegetical meaning); (2) the operational meaning; and (3) the positional meaning" (Turner 1967:50). Exegetical meanings can be determined by questioning informants, being careful to distinguish between answers by specialists and laymen and among informants of different genders and ages. In the process, the researcher must note individual variation in indigenous interpretation. Operational meanings become

apparent through observation of the symbol in performance and the emotional states that accompany its use. Positional meanings can be illuminated by determining the range of social and ritual contexts in which the symbol appears. Through analysis of these three levels of meaning, the anthropologist determines (1) that a symbol is considered a symbol by informants; (2) under what circumstances and by whom it is evoked; and (3) the variety of meanings it may have in various contexts.

Context

Every performance is the result of a complex interplay of contextual variables and the performer's understanding of the plot and message of his or her subject. While I recognize with Bauman and Briggs (1990) that context is not separate from text in actual performance, I find it useful for purposes of description to note those components of context which most obviously affected the folklore performances I observed.

Storyteller. As noted above, I did not undertake a study of individual storytellers' psychological characteristics. That each has particular interests is obvious in the type of lore the storyteller communicates.

Here, with their permission, I introduce those storytellers who played the most important roles in this project.

The most prolific, septuagenarian Ignatius Kosbruk, is the recognized storyteller of Perryville. He is the oldest man in the village and, besides his age, has an impressive pedigree to recommend him as tradition-bearer. His father, George Kosbruk, was known as a dramatic storyteller who enjoyed being on stage. His foster father, Harry Kaiakokonok, was a Russian Orthodox priest who was known as an effective teacher and impressive raconteur. Ignatius's mentor, Wasco Sanook, used to hold nightly storytelling sessions in his own house attended by the young boys in the village. From him Ignatius learned most of the Alutiiq narratives he told me, both *unigkuat* (ancient stories or myths) and *quli'anguat* (more recent accounts; see Chapter V for a discussion of Alutiiq narrative genres).

Polly Shangin, in her eighties the oldest resident of Perryville, is universally respected in the village. She speaks only Alutiiq, although she appears to understand a great deal of English. She recorded parts of her life history in Alutiiq and through translators answered many questions I posed about life on the Alaska Peninsula at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ralph Phillips of Perryville is in his mid-sixties and claims that he is less knowledgeable about traditional lore than Ignatius. He was formerly the bilingual teacher in

the school and his interest in the Alutiiq language continues. He was extremely helpful in translating and transcribing Ignatius's Alutiiq stories, telling some of his own, and instructing me on village traditions.

In Ivanof Bay, I spoke with Olga Kalmakoff and her eldest son Joe. They, along with Olga's daughter Arlene Shugak, were excited about recording and preserving the oral history of the area in general and their family in particular. Their recordings consisted primarily of personal memorates.

In Chignik Lake, Christine Martin recalled much about her upbringing in Perryville and was able to remember several Alutiiq songs which she had sung as a girl. She also shared family histories and genealogies with me, providing context for the people in stories told by others.

Christine's cousin, Mary Boskofsky, also of Chignik Lake, knows many traditional rituals and taboos and plays an important role in upholding community mores. She shared some of this information with me, but did not wish to be recorded. She serves as confidant and advisor to the younger women of the village.

Mary's sister-in-law Doris Lind, now in her early seventies, was the bilingual teacher at Chignik Lake in the late 1970s and early 1980s. She is still fascinated with both the language and the lore and told me many "old stories," but agreed to record only local and family oral

histories and traditions. She protested that she couldn't remember traditional Alutiiq stories completely enough to record them. She often referred to individuals, now deceased, who *really* knew the stories and should have been recorded. Like Ralph Phillips in Perryville, she was extremely helpful in translating and transcribing the Alutiiq language tapes recorded by others.

Doris's husband Bill was known among the young men as the person, aside from Harry Aleck (see below), who knew the most hunting stories and told them the best. The son of Chignik Lake's founder, Dora Andre, Bill had been the village chief for many years. He had excelled as both a hunter and as a village representative to state and federal agencies. At the request of a nephew, Bill recorded several riveting memorates and traditional stories. He expressed great interest in preserving oral traditions and avidly read transcripts of recordings other Alutiiqs had made. Bill died of cancer in the summer of 1993.

In most cases elders agreed to be recorded only after they had been singled out by younger community members as appropriate tradition-bearers. The requirement that one be publicly recognized as a storyteller before assuming that role may have skewed my story collection. It lent a (perhaps unwarranted) appearance of uniformity and unanimity to the lore, since I generally heard only one version of each story. People commonly deferred to

designated elders: "You ought to ask Ignatius for that story." This practice may have masked versions or understandings of the stories different from those I was told.

Deference to selected elders also meant I heard few oral traditions from community members who were in their fifties or younger. Since some of these younger people came from families with no recognized elder storytellers, it is probable that the corpus of stories I was told did not fully represent the knowledge of the population as a whole.[9]

Finally, the expert requirement hampered my discovering whether or in what form the traditions will live on beyond the lives of today's storytellers, as no young adults were willing to practice on me. Morrow suggests that perhaps young Alutiiqs, like Yup'iks, may not "practice" telling the stories to others, but that this does not necessarily mean that they have not learned them. Instead, it is expected that the youth will learn the stories by listening to them over and over and at the appropriate stage in their lives will begin to tell them (Morrow pers. comm. 1993). Established Alutiiq methods of learning oral narratives may be somewhat different;

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[9]Younger people were quite willing to recount personal memorates, and many were skillful raconteurs. What I didn't hear them perform were narratives of community history or tradition, or the "old Alutiiq stories."

Ignatius Kosbruk told me that as a boy he had been required to recite the stories Wasco Sanook had told him until he "got them right." Ignatius admitted that in some cases he hadn't understood the full meanings of the stories until he was much older. Whether or not Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs traditionally would have practiced the stories, elders worry aloud today that many of the stories will die with their generation unless I (or someone else) record them.

I was not successful in undertaking formal recorded interviews with all acknowledged storytellers in the three villages. Ivanof Bay's patriarch and founder, Artemie Kalmakoff (Olga's husband), was a formidable brown bear hunter in his youth. Twice he agreed to allow me to record his bear stories but both times backed down at the last minute. I guessed that he was uncomfortable telling me, a woman, about an activity with both physical and spiritual dangers with which only men were equipped to deal. Olga explained that in addition he was uncomfortable recording in English, his second language, and Artemie remained unconvinced that I preferred that he speak Alutiiq.

I was similarly disappointed that in Chignik Lake, aside from being his guest during starring, I engaged in only short conversations with Harry Aleck, who is considered "the old man with the stories." He is now nearly deaf and does not like to chat, even with those he knows well. He gave me a short vocabulary lesson but was

not interested in recording stories. Everyone in the village laments his hearing loss but resignedly accepts the fact that his stories will likely be forgotten.

Performer/Audience Relationship. My primary role in the communities was understood to be collector of stories and recorder of the Alutiiq language so that both might be preserved for future generations. Once this was understood I achieved entrée into homes in several ways.

First, as a student of the Alutiiq language (albeit a disappointingly slow one), I afforded elders a welcome chance to speak their native language, the satisfaction felt by good teachers when I had learned something and could demonstrate it to their friends, and merriment when I inadvertently uttered scatalogical or nonsensical statements in Alutiiq.

Second, I was initially admitted to many homes because of my acquaintance with previous researchers Davis (1986), Leer (1978, 1985), Scarbrough, and Fall (Fall, Hutchinson-Scarbrough and Coiley 1993), all of whom are well liked and enjoy good reputations in the villages. Villagers were pleased to learn, as my research progressed, that we anthropologists and linguists were "talking to each other" and that local people did not have to repeat for me information they had already given to one of the others.

Third, I was viewed as a committed Alaskan with knowledge and an interest in local history. "Being an Alaskan" holds strong symbolic value throughout the state, where there is a widespread sense of separateness, if not separatism, from the Lower 48 contiguous states. Alaskans are more favorably treated than are outsiders, more often given the benefit of the doubt. The fact that I live in Anchorage also allowed me to be seen in my home setting when villagers visited the city.

My relationship as audience to performer varied. During recorded interviews I believe I was seen less as an individual and more as a conduit who would see that the information reached the intended audience (which varied from "the Alutiiq youth," to state Department of Fish and Game officials, Anchorage people, linguist Leer, and adults in neighboring villages). For instance, when Ignatius Kosbruk of Perryville allowed me to record his "stories," he invariably began each narrative by sitting upright in his chair and clasping his hands on the table in front of him, encircling the microphone with his arms. He gazed into the distance as he spoke, only occasionally turning to me to explain parts of his story. Most often his sight and mind seemed to be on the future generations of Alutiiqs and *Milik'aanaqs* for whom the tape was meant rather than on me. Through his posture and words Ignatius made his

performances a didactic lesson in Alutiiq history, behavior and values.

During unrecorded conversations with women of all ages I was seen as another woman who had experienced many of the same things as my co-conversants. I was often surprised at the personal nature of the information women disclosed to me. By no means was I privy to all the "skeletons in closets," nor did all women confide in me. Still, my age and family situation placed me in a category of mature women who understand about sex, men, women's roles, money, children, alcoholism, and tragedy, and who are willing to talk about their own lives in relation to these topics. Although these conversations yielded much folklore and many oral traditions, they were a special kind of folkloric "performance" in being true dialogues with no central performer.

I observed and took part in several situations in which community rituals were enacted. I frequently attended the Russian Orthodox churches in both Chignik Lake and Perryville as a non-member. I also spent two Russian Christmases (January 1992 and 1993) in Chignik Lake where I went starring with 30 or so singers on three consecutive nights each year and observed masking activities in homes and at the school. Since I was only one of many in the audience at these rituals, my presence seemed not to have affected the activities to any great degree. For instance,

although I recorded starring songs on my tape recorder, so did local residents; although I took photographs, local residents videotaped the proceedings.

In particular instances, of course, my presence caused specific and unusual actions by others. For instance, when my rental house was starred, my landlady had to scramble to provide an appropriate alternative for the absent icon and candle (explained in Chapter VI). Several nights later, I was paid a special visit by a group of masqueraders (children and adolescents) who said they had heard I was anxious to see what masking was all about. They danced for me as I played tapes[10] and posed for photographs before going on to other homes where live musicians played for them.

For the most part, as visible audience and occasional participant, I believe I learned what people wanted me to learn, recorded what they considered the important public stories. This does not mean that everything I was told was expected to become public knowledge. Because of my age and interests, I was expected to be discreet and to exhibit mature judgment. I was also expected to accept the responsibility of seeing that the stories got to the right people, both now and in the future.

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[10]After learning with disappointment that I did not have tapes of the proper accordion music, they borrowed an appropriate tape from a neighbor.

Physical Setting. I obtained folklore data in three types of settings: Recorded interviews took the form of *tête à têtes* over cups of tea at kitchen tables, occasionally witnessed and added to by the storyteller's spouse or children. Unrecorded lore was communicated to me in the course of visiting in homes, berrypicking, gathering shellfish, or "taking a steam" in the *banyu* with other women. And I observed folklore in action during community rituals as a participant or one member of an audience.

Temporal Setting. As expected, I was told seasonally appropriate information. For instance, at Christmas I learned about starring and masking. During Lent I learned about a dart game said to be the only diversion allowed during that period. In December and January I learned about bear hunting. In the fall and springtime I learned about fishing.

Still, many stories were repeated to me several times over the course of the 32 months of my fieldwork. There seems to be no particular season for "traditional Alutiiq stories," personal memorates (although they're often triggered by similar conditions or situations), or oral traditions. I was told that the best times to hear stories would be in the late fall after the winter supply of fish had been put up, during winter after Christmas, because the

weather would be too bad for hunting and people wouldn't be busy then, and during the slack period of Lent. Ignatius told me he had learned all his stories from Wasco Sanook at winter trapping camps, while other men and boys reported that they had learned hunting stories while on hunts. The women cited *banyus* as common occasions for the transmission of tradition. Steam baths may have served a similar role for men, but because *banyu* partners are either of one's own sex or from one's nuclear family, I was not a witness to that situation.

In fact I found people willing to sit down with me whenever I visited. I did follow local advice and, as mentioned above, visited only briefly during fishing season.

I soon became attuned to the best visiting hours in the villages. I did not visit early in the morning because this was housework time during the school year, and during winter holidays people did not get up until late morning. I could visit around noon for about an hour, but from 1:00 to 3:00 many people preferred to watch *The Price is Right* and *General Hospital* on the statewide Rural Alaska Television Network. Between 3:00 and dinnertime was a good time to talk, as were the hours after dinner if there were no small children around.

Community Concerns. A major factor determining discussion and story topics was what was going on in the community at the time. If there had been drinking the night before, that would be the topic the next day. If the Department of Fish and Game had recently sent representatives to explain new hunting regulations, those were discussed in detail afterward. If a new baby had been born, women would reminisce about traditional childbirth procedures. If Protestant missionaries were in town, the topic of religion would be uppermost. If the nightly news had carried coverage of the Alaska Federation of Natives conference, it would be discussed. And so on.

In this paper I have not explicated the relationship each story had to its immediate topical environment but have alluded to that environment when it seems especially relevant. For instance, Father Harry Kaiakokonok's story about the founding of Perryville must be considered in light of the schism which was threatening the community when he told it (discussed in Chapter IV).

Texture

A pervasive dimension of performance includes the performer's use of "texture," or "style" to evoke emotions, mores, etc. Texture includes the choice of words, tone of voice, manner of speaking, and nonverbal behavior (cf.

Dundes 1980:20-32; Toelken 1981). As discussed above, Hymes (1981), Tedlock (1983), and Woodbury (1987) have dealt with the issues of translation and transcription as ways to uncover the meanings underlying both verbal and nonverbal communication in performances through careful studies of narrative style and structure. For instance, Hymes (1981) counsels a search for the story's structure through an investigation of the interplay of form and content. Tedlock's (1983) transcriptions are based on intonation and pauses, which he argues indicate the underlying structure of the narrative. Woodbury (1987) combines elements of Hymes's, Tedlock's, and others' theories to produce an all-encompassing, if technically strenuous, method of transcribing and analyzing performances. All three of the authors see the resulting configuration of verbal and nonverbal messages to be group-specific, having grown from a local tradition which is not duplicated elsewhere. In this sense, folklore is an ethnic marker.

In practice, of course, texture is not separate from other elements of a performance. During each performance I witnessed, the storyteller emphasized some points through body language or tone of voice, anticipated others by implied analogy or example. For the most part, these unspoken dimensions are not reflected in the written transcripts I provide here. Rather than undertake a

detailed transcription as recommended by Hymes, Tedlock, Woodbury, or Fine (1984), I deemed it sufficient for present purposes to attach descriptions of settings and situations to the narrative transcripts.

Ethnohistory

Ethnohistorical method includes the use of archaeological, early historic, and ethnographic data to reconstruct the past. Ethnohistory also intersects with folklore studies in recognizing oral tradition as a vehicle for the historic, symbolic, and social formulations and expressions of the past.

Scholars derive two types of information from oral testimonies. First, they "reconstruct, using all available materials, what 'really happened'" to a people whose history is not widely represented in the written record (Hudson 1966:54; cf. also Thompson 1984:50). Second, they uncover "attitudes toward the past and the uses of history in different societies" (Sturtevant 1966:22; cf. also Allen and Montell 1981:23; Dunaway and Baum 1984).

Allen and Montell (1981) and Vansina (1985), in providing comprehensive guides for studying the relationships among oral tradition, oral history, and written history, concentrate on the first of the uses of oral testimony noted above. They discuss the use of oral

sources in reconstructing history, noting common stylistic patterns and introducing methods for testing the validity of oral sources. Specifically, Vansina (1985) suggests that oral traditions are formed from recollections of events in a complex but patterned way. He reminds us, first, that "the expectation of the event itself distorts its observation" (Vansina 1985:5). He cautions that some parts of a narrative may be reasonably traced to an historical occurrence, while others derive from aesthetic conventions or contemporary concerns. He contends,

> All messages have some intent which has to do with the present, otherwise they would not be told in the present and the tradition would die out. So all messages have another aim besides their possible historical aim (1985:92).

Vansina notes that oral traditions are doubly subjective, involving the selection of the tale by the teller and the interpretive listening by the audience (1985:194-6).

Rosaldo (1980) and Portelli (1991) go beyond Vansina's observation in focusing on the second perspective noted above, the elucidation of contemporary cultural values about the past as expressed in oral narratives. Thus Rosaldo maintains that the ethnohistorian's task is not merely to determine the reliability of oral testimonies pertaining to the past, but more importantly to study what

about the past is considered important to people in the present. Portelli (1991) undertakes this type of analysis in tracing the changes in oral testimony about a single historical incident, the death of Italian steel worker Luigi Trastulli. Portelli carefully traces the effects which changing social and political conditions had on the story's form and content. He maintains that the oral historian's primary task is not to reconstruct the events portrayed in the story, but through that reconstruction to illuminate the "cultural forms and processes by which individuals express their sense of themselves in history" (1991:ix). Portelli finds,

> Its [Luigi Trastulli's death] importance lies . . . in the fact that it became the ground upon which collective memory and imagination built a cluster of tales, symbols, legend, and imaginary recontructions (1991:1).

In this research I follow Allen and Montell (1981) and Vansina (1985) in comparing oral narratives about particular events with written testimony produced at the time. I consider the purpose, intended audience, biases, veracity, and validity of the oral and written sources, remaining alert to the presence of aesthetic conventions which invariably accrue to oral accounts through repeated retelling.

I also extend the analysis of oral testimony to include the method advocated by Rosaldo and practiced by Portelli, recognizing the nonverbal or unstated nature of much of the information contained in oral narrative and the importance of defining the varying contexts in which the narrative is performed through time.

These analyses go far in explaining the historical development of a uniquely Alutiiq identity. They make possible a richer understanding of the history of Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs than is available through written sources alone. A comparison of sources clarifies changes within oral tradition and thereby indicates changes in the Alutiiq identity configuration. Through their oral traditions, today's Alutiiqs indicate how -- and suggest why -- they wish to represent their past. In so doing, they suggest their conceptions of history itself.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Precontact Period on the Alaska Peninsula

On the 1982 edition of the map *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska* (Krauss 1982; Figure 3), the Alaska Peninsula is divided into three linguistic areas: Central Yup'ik in the north, Alutiiq southwest from Egegik to Port Moller, and Unangan, or Aleut, west of Port Moller. The boundaries displayed on the map represent contemporary areas of Native language use.

Linguistic boundaries have not always been as they appear on the map. For instance, Alutiiq and Central Yup'ik diverged from a common language. Linguist Michael Krauss states,

> Yupik probably spread from southwestern Alaska across the Alaska Peninsula into the Kodiak and Chugach regions in fairly recent times also, since although there would be rather low mutual intelligibility at the Alaskan Yupik extremes of Chugach and Norton Sound, there is a fair amount at the border near Bristol Bay (1980:9).

And: "Although the [Alutiiq] language shades toward Central Yupik on the Alaska Peninsula, it is also a fairly well defined unit" (Krauss 1980:99-100).

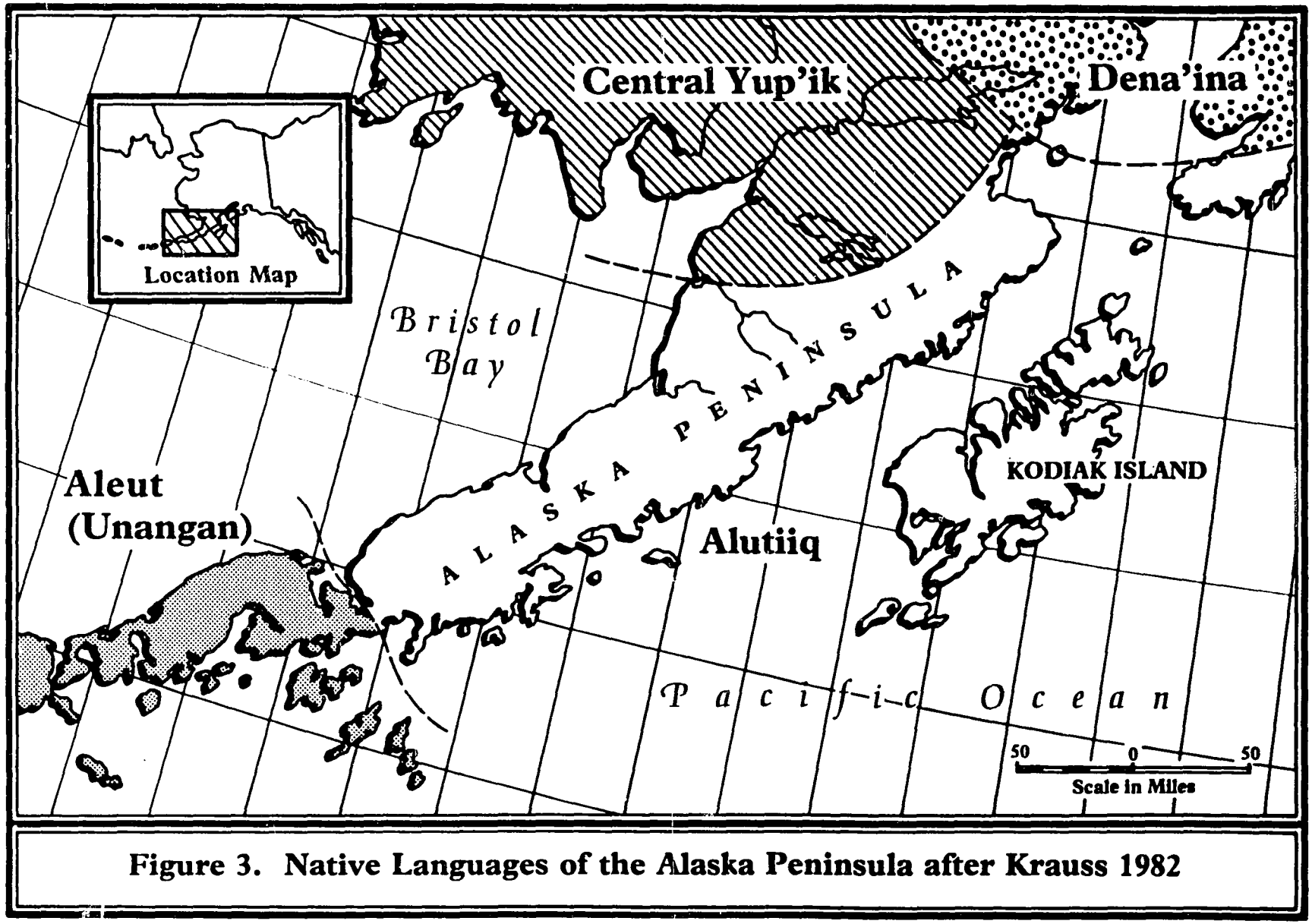

Figure 3. Native Languages of the Alaska Peninsula after Krauss 1982

Areas of language use also changed as people moved. Nineteenth century Russian officials noted that an influx of Yup'ik speakers from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River arrived at the mouth of the Nushagak River early in the century, forcing previous settlers (who were presumably speakers of Yup'ik) to move south or inland onto the Alaska Peninsula (Khlebnikov 1979:77). During the Russian period Alutiiq-speaking Kodiak hunters were relocated to the Alaska Peninsula. In the early 20th century Alutiiq speakers from the settlements of Katmai and Douglas[11] moved southwest to the Chigniks and Perryville in response to a natural disaster and the changing economy.

Just as language boundaries have fluctuated, so have ethnic identity configurations changed; those people designated "Aliaksintsy" or "Alaskan Aleuts" by 18th century Russians would only minimally subscribe to values and behaviors associated with Alutiiqness today. In this chapter I trace the changes in the ethnic identity configurations of Alutiiq-speakers through two and a half centuries. I consider the congruity between linguistic and ethnic boundaries. I suggest a baseline precontact Alutiiq attitude about ethnic distinctiveness which I then contrast

[11]Located near Cape Douglas on the Alaska Peninsula, this settlement should not be confused with the more well-known town of Douglas in southeastern Alaska (see Figure 2).

with ideas about ethnicity which developed during the Russian and American periods.

Archaeological Evidence

An obvious first step in tracing the ethnicity of today's Alutiiqs back through time is to consider the relationship between the observed linguistic diversity and the prehistoric record. Unfortunately, at both the Eskimo-Unangan (Aleut) and the Yup'ik-Alutiiq horizons the relationship between linguistic evidence and ancient material culture is problematic.

The southwesternmost portion of the Alaska Peninsula has yielded only sites from traditions identified with the Aleutian chain. Because of the sharp linguistic boundary between the Unangan and Eskimoan languages (i.e., Central Yup'ik and Alutiiq),[12] archaeologists have sought an equally sharp technological boundary. There is no contemporaneous historic evidence of an actual cultural

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[12]Linguist Krauss explains that

> The split between Eskimo and Aleut is linguistically rather profound, the equivalent of at least 4,000 years of linguistic separation. By "equivalent" I mean literally "as if" there were 4,000 years of separation, since probably there has been *no* separation, and the two language groups are still neighbors (emphasis in original; 1980:7).

borderline between Unangan and Alutiiq peoples, though French explorer Alphonse Pinart (1873b) was told that on the Pacific side the southwesternmost Eskimo (Koniag Alutiiq) settlement was located at Kuiukta Bay, northeast of the present village of Perryville (1873b:12). On the Bering Sea side, oral tradition and archaeological investigation suggest that much of the territory between historic Unangan and Eskimo settlements was either uninhabited or consisted only of seasonal sites (cf. Yesner 1985).

Nor have archaeologists found an ancient break in the material culture assemblages on the peninsula which corresponds in magnitude to linguistic differences. Hiroaki Okada, working at the Hot Springs site at Port Moller on the Bering Sea side, noted that various elements found there reinforced "previous conclusions that the geographic position of the Port Moller site exposed it to ideas emanating from several different directions" (1978:103). In 1975, Dumond, Conton and Shields (1975:58) had similarly concluded, "it is a mistake to expect to find that any material cultural boundary between Eskimos and Aleuts has ever been as sharp as the cleavage between their languages." However, more recently Dumond (in press) cites potentially contradictory evidence that

> there *are* differences in material culture that suggest the presence of relatively sharp

> boundaries of some kind between 2000 and 1000 B.C. Whether they point in part to a boundary between ancestral Eskimos and ancestral Aleuts, or whether they indicate the presence of varied ethnic groups at a time when Aleuts and Eskimos were yet one people, is a question not to be answered here (emphasis in original; in press:101).

Dumond suggests that at about 4000 B.P. there were three separate traditions on the Alaska Peninsula: first, an extension of the Arctic Small Tool tradition on the Bering Sea side from Ugashik northward (extending into areas today inhabited by Iñupiat speakers); second, a culture centering on Kodiak Island and the northern Pacific shores of the Alaska Peninsula and extending southeastward to British Columbia; and third, a culture extending from Port Moller westward to the Aleutians and eastward across the Alaska Peninsula to the Chignik Lagoon area.

Despite variations in the interpretation of the archaeological record, it is generally agreed that Port Moller on the Bering Sea side represents both the furthest eastward extension of Aleut culture and the furthest westward extension of Eskimo culture. For instance, Yesner notes that the Meshik site, 100 miles northeast of Port Moller at Port Heiden, exhibits closer technological affinities to other sites to the northeast than to those to the southwest (1981:16). On the Pacific side, Pinart's (1873b) boundary at Kuiukta Bay has been generally accepted

(e.g., Dumond et. al. 1975:52-3), although Dumond more recently has suggested that by 1000 B.P. the cultural border between Kodiak Island/Pacific coast and Port Moller/Chignik cultures was located instead between Chignik and nearby Kujulik Bay (in press).

Archaeological traditions are complex on the northern part of the Alaska Peninsula as well. As Dumond (cited above) described recently, and as he (1971, 1981, 1988), G. Clark (1977), Henn (1978), and others had identified previously, two separate and simultaneous traditions existed on the northern Alaska Peninsula until about a thousand years ago. One was located on the Pacific coast and at various periods exhibited close similarities with Kodiak Island assemblages. The other was concentrated at the mouths of the Ugashik and Naknek Rivers on the peninsula's Bering Sea side (cf. also D.Clark 1983).

The line on Krauss's map which separates Central Yup'ik from Alutiiq corresponds fairly closely with the technological break between Pacific and Bering Sea coast archaeological traditions. Unfortunately, the map does not reflect the linguistic situation during prehistoric times. Until the early 19th century, there was no true border between Yup'ik and Alutiiq. Linguists have reconstructed an unbroken dialect chain from Bering Sea Yup'ik to Kodiak Alutiiq. The current division into separate languages reflects two situations. First, the 19th century intrusion

of Central Yup'iks speaking a different dialect of Yup'ik from the Bristol Bay inhabitants interrupted the continuous chain (Leer 1985:77). Second, the dialects along the chain are sufficiently diverse that speakers at its extremities cannot easily converse with each other (Krauss 1980:9; Leer 1985:77).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that until 1000 years ago the material cultures of Kodiak Island and the Bering Sea coast of the Alaska Peninsula were widely divergent, suggesting that the people probably did not speak the same language. Donald Clark (in press) considers possible linguistic affinities for Kodiak people of the Kachemak tradition (before ca. 1100 A.D.):

> Considering the profound technological cleavage between the Kachemak tradition and neighboring Arctic Small Tool tradition (ASTt) people who inhabited the Bering Sea side of the adjacent Alaska Peninsula, we cannot look to the ASTt for the source of early Kachemak language and race or ethnicity (in press:121).

Since it is widely accepted that the Arctic Small Tool tradition people were ancestral to today's Eskimos in both culture and language, this raises a central question in Kodiak archaeology: how and when did the Alutiiq language become ensconced there and on the neighboring shores of the Alaska Peninsula?

Archaeologists agree that there is no archaeological evidence to indicate that inhabitants of the Kodiak archipelago or the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula were an Eskimo people before 1000 B.P. After that date, communication across the Alaska Peninsula and on to Kodiak Island appears to have been unimpeded and site configurations in the entire area are substantially the same. Meanwhile, the people on the Bering Sea side had been using diagnostic Eskimo elements such as pottery for a thousand years. Dumond concludes that the cultural communication link that opened up a thousand years ago allowed not only a diffusion of material culture south from the Bering Straits region to the Alaska Peninsula and then across to Kodiak but also a migration of Eskimo-speaking people (1971:43, 47; 1988: 386). He thus sees Kodiak and Pacific Coast Alaska Peninsula inhabitants as a population initially separate from their Bering Sea coast neighbors, with whom beginning a thousand year ago they intermarried and from whom they adopted linguistic and cultural elements.

Other archaeologists are more cautious in deducing ethnic evidence from the archaeological record. William B. Workman (1978), for instance, notes that only on Kodiak can continuity with ethnographic people be documented. He cautions, "Assertions that language changes are epiphenomena are rejected but assumptions equating one

archaeological culture with one language are equally undocumented" (1978:49). Jordan and Knecht (1988) find no evidence for the influx of Eskimo people across the Alaska Peninsula which Dumond suggests, though they agree that there were cultural similarities between the peninsula and Kodiak after 1000 B.P. They state, minor variations in material culture notwithstanding,

> Available archaeological data indicate that the northern Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak were occupied by the same culture for the past 800 - 1000 years. . . . Intrusive population movements from the Bering Sea can only be confidently verified in the nineteenth century (Jordan and Knecht 1988:275).

The linguistic relationship between the prehistoric residents of territories now inhabited by Yup'iks and Alutiiqs remains unresolved, as does a description of the process whereby Kodiak Islanders came to speak an essentially Yup'ik language. Donald Clark (1988) suggests that the search for a prehistoric cultural boundary may be irrelevant in this area, given the way alliances and ethnic membership were probably understood before the modern era:

> The Pacific Eskimo world . . . would have consisted of a large number of community-size tribes. Each could oscillate to its own tune -- and to that of the nearest neighbors with which it frequently interacted. Boundaries probably were irrelevant, though they existed where there were physical barriers and in special cases where there were sharp ethnic cleavages. Through this matrix, interactions could occur in

> any direction subject to the limitations of physical geography. . . . Community distinctiveness easily could be maintained or, conversely, eradicated (1988:222).

In broad strokes, then, archaeological evidence indicates a close relationship of long standing between inhabitants of Kodiak Island and the northern Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula. The record further suggests that these same people were not Eskimo speakers before about 1000 A.D. Finally, linguistic evidence indicates that during protohistoric times (after 1000 A.D.) the language spoken by people from Bristol Bay to Kodiak Island formed a continuous chain.

Historical Evidence

Russian sources identify no Unangan villages north of the Shumagin Islands on the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula and no Alutiiq settlements southwest of Katmai other than the Russian *artel* at Sutkhum (Davydov 1977:192-3; Langsdorff 1968:55). Most of coastline, including the offshore islands on the Pacific side of the peninsula between Stepovak Bay and Katmai, comprised seasonal hunting grounds for both Unangans and Alutiiqs. Russian documents purportedly from the 1780s report that Katmai Alutiiqs informed visiting Russians that they regularly traveled to Sutwik and Semidi Islands, sometimes journeying even

further west toward Unimak Island to hunt sea otters, seals, and sea lions (Polonskii n.d.). Physician and naturalist Georg von Langsdorff, who briefly visited a portion of the Pacific coast of the peninsula in 1806 on his return to Russia, noted that all of the islands lying to the south of the peninsula, with the exception of Sannakh, were hunted but not inhabited (1968:55).

Archaeological evidence corroborates the sparse permanent population along the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula noted by early explorers. Dumond states,

> Unmistakable during the survey . . . was a feeling of surprise that so many apparently suitable beaches and points in the bays of the Pacific Ocean did not yield indications of occupation. The impression was distinctly that the Pacific coast of the peninsula was not heavily occupied within the past two millenia (1987:153).

Later, he adds

> It is almost, if not quite, accurate to say that on islands of the Kodiak group and on those of the eastern Aleutians, everywhere there could be a visible archaeological site, there is one. The same statement simply cannot be made of the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula as it is thus far known archaeologically. And yet in terms of available resources, . . . the Pacific coast of the peninsula should have equalled any of those other regions in its attractiveness to late prehistoric people. It apparently did not, and the reasons for this failure are not now evident (1987:159).

Following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill extensive archaeological reconnaissance revealed many previously unknown sites along the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Nonetheless, peninsula site density remains an estimated 2.6 times lower than on the Kodiak archipelago (Erlandson et. al. 1992:54), due at least in part to "lower diversity, productivity, and accessibility of many coastal habitats" (Erlandson et. al. 1992:57).

The Alaska Peninsula's Bering Sea side was also sparsely populated. The village of Ugashik, slightly inland along the Ugashik River, is the southernmost Bering Sea site mentioned in early Russian sources. During the first part of the 19th century, Ugashentsy (the people of Ugashik) traveled, probably regularly, across the peninsula to the Pacific side to hunt the abundant sea mammals (Davydov 1977:196-7).

The contact-era linguistic affinities of the inhabitants of the peninsula's northern Bering Sea coast are in some dispute among anthropologists. Davydov stated that the Ugashentsy were distinct from their northern neighbors the "Aliagnagomiuts" [modern designation unknown; "people living . . . at the mouth of a large river" (1977:197)], the "Aglagomiuts" (Yup'ik-speaking Aglurmiut who controlled the portion of the Bering Sea coast north of

Ugashik[13]), the "Kuikhpagomiuts" (Yup'ik-speakers of the "Kvikhpak" or Yukon River) and the "Ktsialtans" (Athabaskans living beyond Lake Iliamna) (1977:196-7). During the 1830s Russian-American Company Chief Manager Wrangell (1980) was told that the Ugashentsy had been among those people who had been displaced southward by an invasion of Aglurmiut people from the Kuskokwim region. He explained

> . . . the Agolegmiuts [Aglurmiut] and the Kuskokvim [Kuskokwim] are enemies, since the former were driven from their homes on the banks of the Kuskokvim. . . . They finally moved away to Nunivok [Nunivak] Island and another island at the mouth of the Nushagak, where they settled under the protection of the commander of the [Novo] Aleksandrovskii Redoubt and were safeguarded from the attacks of the Kuskokvim. . . . For their part, the Agolegmiuts expelled the natives living at the mouth of the Nushagak, and these wandered as far as the eastern half of the Aliaska Peninsula and are now known as the Severnovtsy (Northerners) and Ugashentsy (Wrangell 1980:64).

The status of the Aglurmiut as recent immigrants was well known to the Russians before Wrangell's day. Chief Manager Muraviev wrote to the Main Office of the Russian-American Company in 1823, "Aglegmiuts [Aglurmiut] were

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[13]Leer asserts that on linguistic grounds the Aglurmiut were probably closer to Kodiak Alutiiqs than to today's Central Yup'iks: "We now believe that the original Bristol Bay (Aglegmiut) dialect was similar to Koniag Alutiiq on the one hand, and to the Nunivak dialect of Central Yupik on the other" (Leer 1985:77).

originally displaced from Nunivak Island and subsequently pushed south by Kuskokvagmiut, Kiatentsy [Kiatagmiut; see below], and other neighboring peoples" (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#164: May 4, 1823). During the Russian period, the Aglurmiut population centered at the mouths of the Naknek and Nushagak Rivers (Dumond 1986:5). These people also inhabited the southwestern two-thirds of Lake Iliamna (VanStone 1967:xxi).

A fourth Alaska Peninsula group, the Kiatagmiut, inhabited the interior portion of the northern peninsula. VanStone states,

> This subgroup of Yuk [Yup'ik] speakers occupied, at the time of historic contact, virtually the entire Nushagak River and the area to the west as far as and including the Tikchik Lakes (1967:xxi; see also Holmberg 1985:6).

They exploited the inland environment, augmenting coastal resources by trading with the coastal Aglurmiut (VanStone 1967:xxiii-xxiv).

Many anthropologists, following Wendell Oswalt (1967b), have designated the inland Severnovskie[14] and

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[14]I am grateful to Dr. Lydia T. Black for clearing up the history and nomenclature surrounding the "Severnovskie" or "Savonoski" people. In more recent times, the term "Severnovskie" has been spelled "Savonoski" and applied to one or more villages inland from Katmai (Figure 2). The Russian term *Severnovskie* was originally a designation for a group of people (*severnovskie* being the plural form of the adjective "northern") who lived in several settlements in the region around what are now Naknek, Grosvenor and

coastal Ugashik people "Peninsular Eskimos." Oswalt opines that they were originally Yup'ik rather than Alutiiq speakers (1967b), a contention lent some support by Josiah Spurr's report following a journey across the Alaska Peninsula in 1898. Spurr stated,

> From the region of Kolmakof on the Kuskokwim to Katmai the language of all the natives we encountered was the same, although in the various districts different dialects exist, which vary so much sometimes that the traveler who has obtained some knowledge of one dialect is unable to understand another until he has become somewhat used to it. Even between two such closely adjacent settlements as Savonoski and Katmai there is a marked difference in the speech (1900:93).

Furthermore, Russian Orthodox officials placed the Severnovskie villages in the Nushagak, rather than Afognak Parish, a fact which suggests that they may have had closer cultural and/or linguistic ties with these people than with their Alutiiq-speaking Pacific coast neighbors.[15] However,

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Brooks Lakes in the interior of the Alaska Peninsula northwest of Katmai. The name *Savonoski* was eventually applied by the local people to a particular village near the mouth of Iliuk Arm of Lake Naknek, formerly called "Ikak" (mistransliterated as "Ukak" on 19th century American maps). There was also a "New Savonoski" on the Naknek River, established after the Katmai eruption and until the late 1970s inhabited by the people from the original Savonoski. New Savonoski is now abandoned, the people having moved to nearby South Naknek (Vick 1983:238).

[15]Alternatively, the placement of the Ugashik and Severnovskie settlements in the Nushagak Parish may merely reflect transportation routes of the day. The Afognak

Petroff (1900) reported that the Severnovskie villagers chose to interact more closely with the Katmai Alutiiqs than with closer neighbors in the Nushagak parish:

> The people of two villages across the divide [from Katmai], in the vicinity of Lake Walker [he here refers to the two Severnovskie villages], come down to Katmai to do their shopping and to dispose of their furs, undertaking a very fatiguing tramp over mountains and glaciers and across deep and dangerous streams in preference to the canoe journey to the Bristol Bay stations. Only at long intervals a small party will proceed to Nushagak to visit the Russian missionary stationed there, to whose spiritual care they have been assigned without regard to locality or convenience (1900:84).

Oswalt maintains that the Alutiiq language was represented on the Alaska Peninsula only at Katmai, which he considers an enclave of Kodiak Islanders (1967b:8). Other historic and ethnographic evidence suggests Alutiiq rather than Yup'ik ethnic, if not linguistic, affinities for the Severnovtsy by the mid-19th century. Severnovskie church records from the 1840s to 1895 list inhabitants' ethnic ascriptions. During those years, 5 percent of the children born were listed as Aglurmiut, 3 percent as

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Parish priest needed only to cross Shelikof Strait to reach Katmai and the other Pacific coast settlements (cf. AOM 1896, 1902, 1904), but would have had to then portage over a mountain range and float down rivers and lakes to reach the Bristol Bay villages.

Kiatagmiut, and 92 percent as "Aleut" (Dumond 1986:5). The Severnovskie people seem therefore to have considered themselves Alutiiq like their Katmai neighbors. Further, as Petroff (1900) noted, Severnovskie residents frequently visited and even moved to Katmai (cf. Stafeev ms.: May 9-11, 1889 [old style, April 27-29], January 2, 28-29, 1890 [old style, December 21; January 16-17]; Kaiakokonok:1975a). It was Severnovskie and Katmai inhabitants who together established a new Alutiiq-speaking settlement near Cape Douglas on the northernmost part of the peninsula in the 1870s (AOM 1898:508). If an ethnic boundary existed between the Severnovtsy and the Pacific coast inhabitants, it did not interfere with social and cultural interaction.

Linguistic affinities of the Ugashentsy are more problematic. Like the Severnovtsy, they had been forced south from the mouth of the Nushagak River in early historic times (cf. Wrangell 1980). They probably had regular contact with Pacific coast Alutiiq speakers during their yearly portages across the peninsula but were not necessarily Alutiiq speakers themselves. Historically Ugashik has been considered a mixed Yup'ik/Alutiiq village, and I was told by Alutiiq elders that during the 20th century the old route from the Bristol Bay side to the Pacific Ocean was most often traveled by Alutiiqs who

maintained summer residences at Ugashik and winter homes at Kanatak.

In summary, the boundaries (albeit flexible and changing) of Alutiiq territory at the beginning of the Russian period were probably as follows: Alutiiq-speaking people permanently inhabited or seasonally used the Pacific coastline of the Alaska Peninsula from Kamyshak Bay southwest far beyond Katmai -- precisely how far is impossible to say in the absence of evidence of protohistoric era villages. Alutiiq speakers also probably lived inland from Katmai along the Naknek River drainage to the villages of the Severnovtsie people. It is unlikely that Alutiiq-speakers inhabited the Bering Sea coast north of Ugashik (Dumond 1986:3).

Precontact Alutiiq Cultural Characteristics

At the time of contact with Russians, the Alutiiq language was also spoken on Kodiak Island, on the southwestern tip of the Kenai Peninsula, and on the shores of Prince William Sound. Those people who lived in the latter two areas spoke a single dialect which is today termed the *Chugach dialect,* while Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak inhabitants spoke the Koniag dialect (Krauss 1980:44; Leer 1985:77).

The first Russian visitors found the peninsula Alutiiqs to be similar to Kodiak Alutiiqs in more than language. The young Russian naval officer Gavriil Davydov noted in the early 19th century, "The inhabitants of Kad'iak and of all the island described above call themselves Koniagas, but it would seem that this term is often applied to the Aliaksans as well" (1977:148.). Like Koniags, Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs fished, collected intertidal shellfish, and hunted a variety of sea mammals from skin-covered kayaks. In addition, the mainlanders hunted a variety of land mammals, including caribou and brown bear.

The two groups believed in a common origin: On Kodiak one myth held that a female dog on Kodiak and a large spotted male on the Alaska Peninsula had mated. Their issue were the original Koniags (Davydov 1977:185). Iurii Lisianskii, a naval officer who wintered in Kodiak midway through a voyage round the world, recounted a similar story, heard during the winter of 1804-5 (1968:196-7).[16] Hieromonk Gideon, a fellow traveler with Lisianskii, heard still a third story, which led him to conclude, "The affinity of the languages of Kad'iak and Aliaksa inhabitants lends support to such a [sequence of] events

[16]Lantis (1938) notes that the dog-husband motif and the related Sedna story are widespread among Eskimos from Kodiak to Greenland (1938:132-3).

[the migration of the original Kodiak Islanders from the Alaska Peninsula]" (Gideon 1989:59).

Langsdorff, in Alaska in 1805-6, noted the close affinities between Kukak Bay inhabitants on the Alaska Peninsula north of Katmai and those of Kodiak. He said

> The customs, the manners, and in a great degree the clothing and language of the Alaksans [sic] are the same as those of the people of Kodiak. The object in which they diverge the most from each other is in their food. The Alaksans joining on to the continent catch a great many rein-deer [sic] and wild sheep; these constitute a principal part of their food and clothing (Langsdorff 1968:236).

Heinrich Holmberg (1985), a Finnish mining specialist who visited Kodiak in 1851, recorded a story which further testifies to the close relationship between the two peoples. Holmberg's narrator, a Koniag, said, "Katmai . . . inhabitants (Aglegmiuts) were hostile to the Koniags although they spoke our language" (Holmberg 1985:60). The use of the term "Aglegmiuts" may have been a mistake, either by Holmberg or his informant, since all other sources consider Katmai inhabitants to have been not Aglurmiut but "Aleut" or Koniag (cf. Polonskii n.d., Khlebnikov 1979:32, 70, 77).

Davydov noted some differences between the peoples of the Kodiak archipelago and the mainland: He opined that Aliaksintsy *baidarkas* [kayaks] "go better than [those of

Koniag, Unangan, and Dena'ina] for they are made shorter and narrower" (Davydov 1977:202). He also described Aliaksintsy bows, which were unlike those used on Kodiak. They were sinew-backed, carved, and skillfully decorated, like those of the Kenaitsy [Dena'ina] (Davydov 1977:199, 204). A comparison of peninsula and mainland masks and hats is still in preliminary stages. However, there are clear stylistic differences between those items made on the peninsula and those on Kodiak (Desson pers. comm. 1991).

During precontact and early Russian days, the Alutiiqs of Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula engaged simultaneously in trade and warfare. The trade provided Koniags with sinew and caribou skin from the peninsula (Davydov 1977:151). The Koniags who lived on the northern and western coasts of the island also traded amber and dentalium for caribou antlers, caribou parkas, and long caribou hair used for embroidery from the Alaska Peninsula. Those Koniags from the southern and eastern shores traded with the Kenaitsy, Chugach Alutiiqs, and Natives of Sitka (Gideon 1989:57). Almost 50 years later, Holmberg reported that an extensive trade network had carried amber from Kodiak to Bristol Bay and the Nushagak River (1985:38). He was also told of trade between Koniags and Dena'ina as well as Tlingits (Holmberg 1985:57; Ellanna and Balluta 1992:18, 21, 58).

Warfare was equally common. The German physician Carl Merck, who briefly visited Kodiak in 1790 with the Billings/Sarychev Russian Naval expedition, reported, "In their wars one village attacks another one merely for the sake of booty" (1980:109). Archimandrite Ioasaf Bolotov explained about five years later that the aim in warfare was to capture prisoners and loot (Black 1977:86). To this can be added Davydov's comment that "more often than not the cause of their taking up arms was the deepseated hatred between tribe and tribe" (1977:162). Commonly, the Koniags from the northern and western parts of the island engaged in wars against the Alaska Peninsula inhabitants, while those from the south and east raided the Kenaitsy and Chugach Alutiiqs (Gideon 1989:43-4). Interestingly, these enemies sometimes constituted the groups which traded with each other during peacetime.[17] Davydov reported that the constant warfare of the northwestern Koniags, both amongst themselves and with the Aliaksintsy, made them bolder and more daring than their fellows (1977:159). Archimandrite Ioasaf noted that Koniags undertook war constantly with

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[17]Burch and Correll discuss the juxtaposition of alliance and conflict among the Iñupiat: "Our data suggest that inter-regional relations in general were characterized by a kind of 'dynamic tension' in which particular events -- a fight in an inter-regional football game at a fair, or a particularly thoughtful gift at a messenger feast -- could throw relations out of balance toward *either* the negative or positive poles" (emphasis in the original; Burch and Correll 1971:34).

Unalaska Unangan, Kenaitsy, and Chugach Alutiiqs (Black 1977:86). Holmberg described warfare thus:

> The wars of the Koniags were by surprise attack where . . . the prisoners were either tortured to death or enslaved. War was not only fought with neighboring or alien tribes but also amongst one another (1985:56).

Gideon noted that the idea of a raid might originate from a single individual, who then attempted to convince others to join in the enterprise (1989:42). Polonskii's (n.d.) unsubstantiated report of a 1782 reconnaisance of the Alaska Peninsula describes one method whereby wartime allies might be summoned. He quotes a Katmai Alutiiq as follows:

> How can we be in agreement with such people [Russians and Unangan] or even submit to them while we are feared by all our neighbors who are subordinate to us? When needed, we call on them for help by lighting fire signals, and we, too, aid others (Polonskii n.d.).

Aside from such brief statements, there are only hints in the surviving record of how the precontact Alutiiqs apportioned power, made decisions, and allied themselves for group action. All writers maintained that the village was the basic territorial unit, and that each village had a leader. At the same time, 19th century sources suggest that the "village leaders" actually had authority only over

their extended family. Gideon (1989), writing in the early 1800s, provided the most detailed statement. He reported that until 1784 each settlement had been "ruled" by an *anayugak*, or leader, who had his own kazhim. The office of *anayugak* was hereditary, but its power was limited, the leader having authority to punish only slaves and members of his own family. Nonetheless, he was shown great deference, had powers of persuasion, and was the primary counselor in both war and peace (Gideon 1989:40-1). Carl Merck corroborated this information:

> The strongest and most intelligent man of a village is acknowledged as the leader (*ngayokak*) among the people. But he has no real power, because no one can command anyone but his relative (1980:109).

Archimandrite Ioasaf elaborated on the nature of the *toions'* [leaders'] power. They had

> gained fame in war, and have numerous prisoners whom they treat with arbitrary power. . . . But they have no power over their neighbors and have no power to punish crimes. No force could bring their peers into submission, but they lead by maintaining good order, a show of concern and care for their fellows' wellbeing, by favors, and various political means (Black 1977:84).

Davydov noted that because they lacked any organization beyond the village, the Koniags were ineffective against the Russians: "Lack of unanimity

amongst the islanders has been the main factor in this, rather than caution on the part of the Russians" (1977:188).[18]

Birket-Smith, basing his conclusion on the testimonies of elders he visited in the 1930s, maintained that the Chugach Alutiiqs likewise considered the village the basis for political grouping:

> As among all other Eskimo, tribes in a political sense were unknown, whereas there were certain geographical groups named after their principal village or some other remarkable locality within the territory. It is needless to say that the number of such groups was hardly absolutely fixed, but might change according to local views and custom. Nor were the territories of these "tribes" sharply separated from one another; neither the "tribes" nor the families had definite territories (Birket-Smith 1953:20).

The Ugashik practice of trans-peninsula travel, noted above, was typical of Alutiiq mobility during the Russian period, and probably before as well. An early Russian-American Company Manager of Kodiak, Vasilii Kashevarov, explained in the 1830s that small settlements numbering about 20 persons aften arose as people moved around the area, the inhabitants of these new settlements maintaining affiliation with their former villages (ms.).

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[18]This intervillage disorganization in matters of warfare may not refer to the precontact situation. Black (in press) describes a strong initial Koniag resistance to Shelikhov's arrival on Kodiak Island which was eventually broken through firepower and the taking of hostages.

The precise makeup of Koniag households is unclear. Merck, who observed Koniag houses in 1790, stated imprecisely that "a household is made up of relatives and friends" (1980:100). Davydov (1977) reported that the number of people living in one house was variable. He noted that the number of *zhupans*, or side rooms, varied,

> depending upon the number of families living together. . . . If several families are living together each has its own separate place for sleeping, marked out simply by a blanket spread on the ground (Davydov 1977:154).

Ioasaf stated that almost every family had its own house, and many had more than one seasonal dwelling (Black 1977:85). He did not describe the makeup of the "family."

Similarly, knowledge about Koniag Alutiiq marriage customs remains incomplete. Plural marriages were accepted, and marriage was reportedly a matter of choice (Gideon 1989:50), although testimony I collected from elderly Alutiiq women indicates that at least during the early 20th century the choice was one-sided: the man may have chosen his wife, but the woman was obliged to marry him. Lisianskii implied that a century earlier young men chose brides from other villages:

> A young man, on hearing that in such a place is a girl that he thinks will suit him, goes thither, carrying with him the most valuable things he is possessed of, and proposes himself for a husband. . . . The husband always lives

> with the parents of the wife, and is obliged to serve them, though occasionally he may visit his own relations (1968:198).

To this Davydov added, "After some time has elapsed the newlyweds go off to their own house -- but if the girl does not want to she remains living with her father" (1977:182).

The extent of village exogamy is unclear, but Lisianskii's testimony indicates that at times Alutiiqs married outside their villages. This in turn suggests that some villages were in a state of long-term alliance with each other, since prospective spouses were apparently acquainted with each other before the wedding.

The Koniag marriage system accomodated other circumstances as well. Wrangell wrote, "I will only remark that the Chugach and Kadiaks have intermingled with the American tribes, whose women they steal" (1980:59). Forced marriage or concubinage with Alutiiqs of other settlements as well as with "foreign" women of other ethnicities was therefore practiced. It is reasonable to assume that the various trading expeditions also resulted in marriages. There were certainly fairly stable relationships of some sort across Shelikof Strait, for one Russian skipper reported that in 1782 the father and four brothers of the Katmai *toion* resided on Kodiak (Polonskii n.d.).

Summary: Precontact Alutiiq Ethnicity

Archaeological, linguistic, and historic evidence point to an extremely close relationship between Kodiak Islanders and Pacific coast Alaska Peninsula inhabitants, probably extending back a thousand years. In historic times the material cultures of the two regions were very close but not identical (differences have been noted in *baidarka*, bow, and mask forms). Because so little information has survived about Native life on the peninsula during the precontact and Russian eras, Kodiak records must serve as the basis for cultural information about peninsula Alutiiqs.

The following points can be made with relative certainty. Peninsula Alutiiqs, like those on the Kodiak archipelago, lived in villages and belonged to no permanent political unit larger than the village. Although detailed evidence for precontact Alutiiq alliance strategies is lacking, it appears that political affiliations followed kinship and territorial lines, as described by Burch among north Alaskan Eskimos (1975:244-47). There were probably alliances of long standing between families living in nearby villages, or indeed within a single settlement. The peninsula Alutiiqs recognized a common origin, language, and culture with the Koniags, but inhabitants of the two

sides of Shelikof Strait did not feel themselves to be a single people.

In fact, concepts of membership in any group beyond recognized kin units and the shifting makeup of the home village was probably foreign to precontact Alutiiqs. Their society likely consisted of "territorially centered . . . village groups" rather than discretely bounded territories, similar to the situation Fienup-Riordan describes for the Central Yup'ik (1984:64). That is, each extended family ranged within a particular area, traveling seasonally to a central village site where other families simultaneously converged from their own hunting and gathering areas. The sum of the areas exploited by all the families from a particular village did not constitute a bounded territory but rather represented the parameters of the subsistence life of the village. Indeed, the territories utilized by members of one village might overlap those used by families from other villages, a situation which could cause strife or even warfare. Fienup-Riordan explains that contiguous Yup'ik villages were unified into regional confederations which engaged in warfare against other confederations. She cautions that,

> contrary to what has been implied in the literature (Zagoskin 1967; Nelson 1899; Oswalt 1967), although ideologically and socially bounded, these confederations were not distinct politico-territorial collectivities, but rather regional designations implying a potential

> alliance between more precisely definable village groups (Fienup-Riordan 1984:64).

Polonskii's (n.d.) statement quoted above regarding the ease with which Katmai Alutiiqs enlisted allies for warfare suggests that a similar situation obtained among Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs.

Reported 18th century Alutiiq villages on the Alaska Peninsula were few in number, including only Kaliak (south of Cape Douglas), Katmai, and Kukak on the Pacific side, and the possible Alutiiq Severnovtsy settlements of Alinnak and Ikak along the Naknek River system (Vasiliev 1831-2 in Litke 1835) (Figure 2).[19] The peninsula Alutiiq villages together probably constituted a marriage universe or deme, for their villages were few in number and the inhabitants had ample opportunity for intervillage communication, spoke the same dialect of the same language, and provided unrelated (or only distantly related) marriage partners.

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[19]Pre-contact population figures are of course nonexistent, but according to Langsdorff the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq population had at one time been substantially larger than when he visited in 1806 (1968:235). Langsdorff's statements must be used with caution; however. Pierce reports, "Even before he left Kamchatka [Langsdorff] had formed a negative impression of the RAC [Russian-American Company]. He condemns the company for its exploitation of the workers and of the natives . . ." (Pierce 1990:289). Still, there may have been additional Alutiiq villages in the early 18th century which had been abandoned by the time complete Russian charts were compiled.

Marriage among peninsula Alutiiqs was probably sometimes village exogamous, though not always so. Both voluntary and involuntary marriages and sexual unions were contracted between peninsula and Koniag residents and with more distant peoples. Cultural and social relationships also included warfare and enslavement.

Close cultural and personal ties did not prevent strife, but they did ensure that all who were involved knew and shared the rules governing the strife. The Alutiiqs from the two sides of the strait thus likely recognized their affinities during peacetime and accentuated the boundaries that separated them when in conflict. Their sense of ethnic identity *vis à vis* each other was situationally defined, neither immutable nor stable.

In contrast, it is probable that by the beginning of the Russian era peninsula Alutiiqs felt a sense of distinctiveness -- based on recent conflicts -- from their neighbors the Aglurmiut and Kiatagmiut who had invaded nearby areas in recent memory, perhaps causing territorial disruption for the Alutiiqs as well. As with the Koniags, peninsula Alutiiqs both traded and warred with these Yup'ik speakers. At the very least, the facts that for a thousand years all northern peninsula inhabitants had shared a common material culture and that the Alutiiq and Central Yup'ik languages formed an unbroken dialect chain indicate a great degree of interaction among these peoples.

The Alutiiqs felt an animosity toward the Unangan which seems not to have been tempered by periodic peaceful trade relationships. Contemporary folklore contains many stories of raids between Peninsula Alutiiqs and *Taya'uqs* (the lower peninsula and Shumagin Island Unangans; see Chapter VII).[20] Nineteenth century Russian observers also noted the longstanding enmity between Koniag Alutiiqs and Unangan (Polonskii n.d.; Davydov 1977:188; Holmberg 1985:58). Polonskii stated, "Alaska Peninsula Koniags harbor enmity against the Aleuts since ancient times and war cannot be avoided" (n.d.). Veniaminov reported the situation from the Unangan point of view:

> But with the Kad'iak people they [the Unangan] had constant wars since time immemorial. The Aleuts considered the Kad'iak people to be their irreconcilable enemies. The very word enemy, *Angadutix̂*, was used instead of the *Qanáĝix̂*, an inhabitant of Kad'iak and vice-versa (spellings as in original; 1984:205).

In summary, when the Russians arrived, the Alutiiqs of the Alaska Peninsula had a sense of who they were in relation to all their known world. They were aware of

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[20]There is some confusion over the meaning of the term *taya'uq*. Birket-Smith stated that the Chugach Alutiiqs called Kenai Peninsula Dena'inas "Tayaut" (Birket-Smith 1953:99), while Alutiiqs of the lower Kenai Peninsula, like Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, use the term to refer to Unangan. Holmberg reported that the term, which he spelled *tajauth,* was the Koniag name for Fox Island Aleuts (Holmberg 1856:413). Leer reports that the word derived from the Unangan *tayaĝux̂* ("man") (Leer, pers. comm. 1993).

degrees of difference in language and culture, and of whom they could call friends, who were enemies, and who might be either, depending on the situation. Alliances were made, but a true sense of belonging resided only in the kin unit and the village.

The Russian Period On The Alaska Peninsula

Earliest Contacts

The Shumagin Islands off the southern shore of the Alaska Peninsula were first spotted by Europeans in 1741. Bering's ship the *Sv. Pëtr* sailed among these islands in September of that year. Indigenous people paddled out in kayaks to inspect the ship (Steller 1988:97). They are assumed to have been Unangan, like the inhabitants of the nearby Aleutian Islands.

The Russian fur trade in Alaska began on the Aleutian Islands in 1745. In less than two decades Russian ships began visiting the Alaska Peninsula to the northeast and cartographers charted part of its coast. In 1762, the *Sv. Gavriil*, owned by the merchant Ivan Bechevin and skippered by Gavriil Pushkarev, sailed through False Pass, which separates the first of the Aleutians, Unimak Island, from the Alaska Peninsula. The ship's crew spent the winter on the peninsula in Bechevin Bay in close proximity to Unangan

inhabitants (Tikhmenev 1978:10; Fedorova 1973:3; Pierce 1990:41; Alekseev 1990:50).

In 1768-1769, a Russian expedition under M. D. Levashev and P. K. Krenitsyn explored the new Russian discoveries, including the Alaska Peninsula (Fedorova 1973:104). A Russian admiralty chart of 1767, which would have been available to Levashev and Krenitsyn, shows a stunted Alaska Peninsula (Efimov 1964:140). A Russian map summarizing discoveries to 1779 indicates that the contours of the Alaska Peninsula were well known 10 years after Levashev and Krenitsyn's expedition (Efimov: 1964:165).

Russian Economic Activity

Russian furtrading companies began activities on the Alaska Peninsula with one goal: to obtain the rich pelts of furbearing animals for trade in European and Asian markets. A single enterprise, the Russian-American Company (RAC), was the eventual winner in a battle for the trade monopoly in Russian America. RAC agents on the Alaska Peninsula sought the luxurious and lucrative pelt of the sea otter more than any other. They impressed, and after 1818 hired, Alutiiq men to hunt the animals from kayaks along the shores of the Alaska Peninsula. Despite a rapid decline in the numbers of sea otters due to overhunting, these pelts were so valuable that they continued to be the basis of the

Alaska Peninsula monetary economy until the closing of trading posts altogether at the turn of the 20th century. In addition to sea otter pelts, agents paid for the skins of bears, foxes, seals, waterfowl, and caribou.

Plans to establish an Alaska Peninsula *artel*, or trading station, were made soon after Russian vessels first sailed along its shores. A 19th century manuscript by A. Polonskii, purportedly based on original Russian documents, reports an attempt to establish a station as early as 1782. Polonskii recounts a voyage which Dmitrii Polutov and Dmitrii Pan'kov made along the Alaska Peninsula coast and among its offshore islands. At "Sanikliuk Island" off the shore of the Alaska Peninsula beyond Unga, the ship and its contingent of 200 Unangan *baidarkas* encountered unfriendly "Koniags" from Katmai. Katmai was at that time likely a Native village whose inhabitants were unaccustomed to Russians, as indicated by their harsh resistence to the visiting Europeans and Unangan. An ensuing battle and long siege resulted in many deaths. Polutov and Pan'kov left without establishing successful trade relations with the Katmai Alutiiqs (Polonskii n.d.).

The Golikov-Shelikhov Company (predecessor of the RAC) established *artels* at Katmai and Sutkhum only a few years later. In 1784 Grigorii Shelikhov secured a Russian settlement at Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island, and by the next year the Alaska Peninsula was used as a hunting ground

for Kodiak and Aleutian Islanders (Fedorova 1973:15). In 1786, Shelikhov ordered the founding of an *artel* at Katmai on the Alaska Peninsula opposite Kodiak Island (Tikhmenev 1979:7), and in a book published five years later recalled that the "Katmatsk settlement" had been in existence in 1786 (Shelikhov 1981:47). Greek shipper and trader Evstrat Delarov, who became chief manager of the American settlements of the Golikov-Shelikhov company the following year (Pierce 1990:116), may have been the founder of the Katmai *artel*. Shelikhov reported, "On February 25th [1786] I received a letter dated February 19th from the Greek Evstrat Delarov of the Katmatsk settlement" (1981:47).

Apparently the *artel's* initial attempts did not go smoothly. In September 1787, skipper Gerasim Izmailov of the *Tri Sviatitelia* . . . noted in his vessel's log that he had received word that *baidarshchik* [overseer of local trade and hunting operations] Maksimov and the men of "our [i.e., the Golikov-Shelikhov] *artel* stationed on the Alaska mainland" at or near the Native settlement of Katmai had been killed by Natives of that village (ms.: Folios 16 and 20).

The Alaska Peninsula was still largely unexplored by Europeans. In 1791, the Russian navigator Dmitrii Bocharov traveled by *baidara* (a large open skin boat similar to an umiak) along the northern (Bering Sea/Bristol Bay) shore of the peninsula, ascended the Kvichak River, returned to

Bristol Bay and ascended the Egegik River to what is now known as Becharof Lake, and finally portaged to the Pacific side. From Portage Bay (later the site of the village of Kanatak) he paddled across Shelikof Strait to Karluk on Kodiak Island (Litke 1835:269-70). The chart made on that voyage indicated (by means of four dots), but did not name, a settlement at the mouth of Katmai River (Efimov 1964:#180).

By 1792, at least part of the Alaska Peninsula was under some degree of Russian dominion, for in that year a census of peninsula residents was made. Unfortunately, surviving records do not specify which settlements were counted, nor do they indicate whether the people counted were indigenous to the settlements or had been imported from Kodiak or the Aleutian Islands (Khlebnikov 1979:24). In 1793, Baranov mentioned in a letter "dependent Aliaksan natives," a phrase which indicates that peninsula Natives had been incorporated into the Russian fur trade in the same manner as Kodiak and Aleutian Islanders (Tikhmenev 1979:32, 33, 35). Within less than a decade, the peninsula had become a source of both furs and hunters for the Russians.

An early reference to the "Katmai *artel*" appears in a letter Baranov wrote in 1795 to Shelikhov and Aleksei Polevoi (Tikhmenev 1979:64). By at least 1798 the Alaska Peninsula boasted two Russian settlements, the Katmai *artel*

and the "establishment" at Sutkhum (Tikhmenev 1979:95, 98).[21] These two were to remain the only Russian posts on the Pacific side of the peninsula throughout the Russian era, their respective sizes and economic importance periodically waxing and waning. For instance, in 1820, shortly before he left Alaska for Russia, Chief Manager Ianovskii proposed that Katmai be reduced to an *odinochka* (a small isolated outpost) and that Sutkhum be abolished (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#60:April 15, 1820).

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[21]The location of Sutkhum is problematic. Although most modern sources place the *artel* on Sutwik Island (e.g., Crowell 1992:29), evidence points to its having been located instead on the mainland of the peninsula. Baranov did not indicate the Sutkhum establishment's location in those letters and reports that remain extant (cf. Tikhmenev 1979). Gideon's references to Sutkhum lacked the word "island." He explained, for instance, "They hunt sea otters along the south coast of Aliaksa [the Alaska Peninsula], between Kenai Bay and Sutkhum" (Gideon 1989:64). Davydov, who never visited the *artel*, was the first to locate it on Sutwik Island (Davydov 1977:192). Khlebnikov specifically stated that Sutkhum was located on "Aliaska" (Khlebnikov 1979.:42-3; 65). Vasilii Kashevarov's reports from the 1830s agree; he stated, "The Sutkhum *odinochka* is located on the east side of the Aliaksa Peninsula, to the south of Katmai Bay" (Kashevarov ms.). Alphonse L. Pinart, who traveled up the Alaska Peninsula's Pacific coast from the Aleutian Islands, actually visited the site and located it on the mainland as had most of the earlier sources (Pinart 1872; 1873b:14-15). In the 1880 census report Petroff similarly stated that "Sutkhoon" was located on the "Aliaska Peninsula" (Petroff 1900:89). Further, Bureau of Indian Affairs archaeologists conducted a site survey on Sutwik Island in 1990 and were unable to locate any Russian structures. Nor, unfortunately, did they locate the site of the Russian-American Company's *artel* at Kujulik Bay where Pinart had landed (O'Leary, pers. comm. 1993). To local residents, the locale "Sutkhum" refers to an old village site on Kujulik Bay.

Sutkhum was never more than a minor outpost of the Russian-American Company. In 1803, Davydov noted that it contained an *artel* made up of Kodiak Natives, but that there was no indigenous settlement in the vicinity (Davydov 1977:192-3). The records detailing its reestablishment after the 1820 order for its abolition are contradictory; Kashevarov reported that it was reopened in 1826 under *baidarshchik* Patiukov (Kashevarov ms.), Khlebnikov provides harvest figures for 1824 and population figures for 1825 (1979:31, 32), Chief Manager Etholen reported that it had been restored in 1830 (Pierce ms.:#220:May 9, 1842), and the Russian-American Company's correspondence first mentions the Sutkhum *odinochka* again, after a silence of eleven years, in 1831 (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#109:April 26, 1831). It is mentioned again in 1842 as a small post (Pierce ms.:#220:May 9, 1842); it is not mentioned as a post of any kind in the 1842 Annual Report of the Russian-American Company (RAC 1842:41), nor is it marked as a settlement on Teben'kov's chart in his 1852 atlas of Russian America (Teben'kov 1981:Map XXII).

In 1828, Chief Manager Chistiakov considered establishing an *artel* at Kamyshak Bay (lower Cook Inlet), the shores of which form the northeasternmost portion of the Alaska Peninsula. His intention was to provide a link in the supply line to the new post on the mainland, Novo-

Aleksandrovskii Redoubt (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#171: May 16, 1828). Nothing came of the idea.

The Russians also investigated the Alaska Peninsula's geological potential during the 19th century. Baranov reported that coal had been found at Sutkhum in 1818, though no subsequent documents mention this discovery. Presumably, the coal was not of a high enough quality to warrant mining (Pierce 1984:58, 85). Russian historian A. I. Alekseev reports that the naturalist Ilia Voznesenskii had also discovered coal at Katmai in 1839 (Alekseev 1987:33). This fact has not been corroborated elsewhere; in fact, Voznesenskii was en route to Alaska throughout 1839, not arriving until May of 1840 (Pierce 1990:534). In 1843, Chief Manager Etholen discussed replacing New Archangel (Sitka) with Katmai as the hot springs treatment center of Russian America. The idea was abandoned, apparently because additional buildings and personnel would have been required (Pierce ms.:#129:April 16, 1843). In 1861, the Creole explorer and naval officer Aleksandr Kashevarov reported that he had been told of oil lakes near Katmai (Pierce 1990:216). In the end, Katmai and the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula remained important to the Russians for the fur trade only.

Final Explorations of the Alaska Peninsula

The mapping of the Alaska Peninsula was completed during the late 1820s and 1830s. In 1828, the naval officer Mikhail Staniukovich surveyed its northern Bering Sea coast (Litke 1835; Pierce 1990:483). In 1831, Ensign Ivan Vasiliev was instructed to map the Pacific coast of the peninsula from Cape Douglas southwest (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#8:February 17, 1831). He did not complete the task, and the next year Chief Manager Wrangell ordered him to continue his survey of the "Aliaska shore" (Arndt and Pierce 1990:#29:February 16, 1832). Later that year, Wrangell criticized Vasiliev for not covering enough ground during the previous year. The explorer was told to leave his wife and in-laws at home the following year, and not to oppress the inhabitants and *baidarshchiks* he met along the way (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#89:April 22, 1832). Also in 1831, Technician Obriadin was instructed to map the Shumagins and southwest coast of the peninsula (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#197:April 30, 1831). In 1836, Vasilii Voronkovskii mapped the Pacific shore of the peninsula south of Chignik (Tikhmenev 1978:185; Pierce 1990:533).

Russian Period Settlements

Although Katmai and Sutkhum were the only two Russian outposts on the Pacific side of the peninsula, other populated locales appear in documents dating from the first half of the 19th century. Davydov's mention of the Ugashik River settlement is noted above. Early in the 19th century, the Ugashentsy abruptly gave up their fur trade with the Russians, even forfeiting the hostages which had been taken as assurances of their cooperation (Davydov 1977:196-7).

About the same time, in 1806, the naturalist Georg von Langsdorff visited a Native village called "Toujoujak." It lay 25 miles northeast of Katmai in Kukak Bay. Langsdorff's short but fruitful visit yielded a description of the village and the people as well as objects for European museums (Langsdorff 1968:48, 233ff). The naturalist noted that the population of the entire Alaska Peninsula had decreased markedly during the ten years of contact with Russians, a trend which he attributed to the practice of "most of the young people having been carried away to Sitka to hunt sea-otters" (Langsdorff 1968:235).

A settlement called Severnovskoe (the singular neuter form of the adjective "northern") appears in an appendix to Father Gideon's notes in a record of an 1807 marriage (1989:141). The Severnovskie people and at least one

village were also mentioned in explorer Pëtr Korsakovskii's travel journal. While making final preparations in Katmai for a trip across the Alaska Peninsula, he was told that Severnovskie men were plotting his murder. The rumor was apparently unfounded and Severnovtsy later served as his interpreters (VanStone 1988:19). By 1832, the *baidarshchik* at Katmai had a measure of control over Severnovskie men, for he was instructed to send two Katmaitsy and four Severnovtsy to help Kolmakov at the Novo-Aleksandrovskii Redoubt (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#324: July 10, 1832).

The Severnovskie villages of Alinnak and Ikak lay in the interior of the peninsula along a portage route which began at Katmai, crossed the coastal mountains, then descended the Naknek Lake drainage (Vasiliev 1831-2 in Litke 1835). Informants report that during the late 19th century there were still two Severnovskie villages, called "Savonosky" and "Upper Savonosky", residents of which were frequent visitors to Katmai (Kaiakokonok:1975b). The villages were destroyed during the 1912 Katmai eruption, and the inhabitants resettled in South Naknek and New Savonosky on the Naknek River.

Other locales were mentioned in the notes of Vasilii Kashevarov. Manager of the Kodiak region during the 1830s, he noted two additional peninsula villages in the Katmai area, one which he called "Naugikaksoe," probably the now-abandoned Nauklak, and another called "Alikhanovskoe,"

possibly the Sevenernovskoe settlement of Alinnak, or a location called Alagnak in the interior of the peninsula between Lake Iliamna and Dillingham (Kashevarov ms.).

Russians at Katmai

The next recorded successor of the slain Maksimov at the Katmai *artel* was named "Barsanov" or "Barsanaev." Chief Manager Aleksandr Baranov, who succeeded Delarov as chief manager of Shelikhov's North American enterprises, reported in an 1800 letter that he had "told Barsanaev to make a search" for the missing ship the *Phoenix*, presumed to have gone down in Shelikof Strait (Tikhmenev 1979:105).

Shortly afterward, Gavriil Davydov spent the winter of 1802-3 and a month during the summer of 1805 on Kodiak Island (Davydov 1977:passim). While there, he met Katmai residents from whom he obtained information about the people and the *artel*. Davydov's notes, made during his sojourn in Alaska, were later edited and published. He wrote that the *baidarshchik* of Katmai received by barter furs from the north and the interior of the peninsula (Davydov 1977:192). Thus, although no Russian settlement existed north of Katmai at this time, Natives in those areas (likely Aglurmiut and Kiatagmiut) were engaged in the fur trade with the Russians. Davydov also described the route and demographic makeup of the peninsula hunting party

which regularly traveled between Katmai and Sutkhum in the spring and early summer (1977:195). His near contemporary visitor to Alaska, the Orthodox hieromonk Father Gideon, likewise mentioned the hunting party from "Aliaksa" (1989:62). Davydov explained that, though Alaska Peninsula men were placed in large hunting parties and taken wherever the company required just as were Koniagas, their wives were not required to gather as large quantities of sarana and berries for the Russian-American Company as were their Koniaga counterparts (1977:196). Various documents attest to the fact that Katmai Natives, like other "Aleuts," were moved around the colony for the company's business (Davydov 1977:193; Gideon 1989:6; Arndt and Pierce 1990b :#74:February 27, 1823).

Katmai was mentioned, though unfortunately not described, in the journals of explorer Pëtr Korsakovskii, who in 1818 was charged with traversing the peninsula to determine the feasibility of establishing a new Russian post in the Bristol Bay area. Korsakovskii stayed at the *artel* for two weeks, during which time he prepared for the journey and became acquainted with the current manager, Fëdor Kolmakov, with whom he was to travel. Korsakovskii noted that the Katmai women did not know how to sew the same type of boot as that worn on Kodiak (VanStone 1988:20).

Soon after Korsakovskii's journey and the subsequent establishment of a redoubt on the Nushagak River, Chief Manager Ianovskii suggested that Katmai be reduced to an *odinochka*. Then, in 1823, the Russian buildings at Katmai burned down. Chief Manager Muraviev wrote to the Main Office in St. Petersburg, "Katmai burned down completely, but it is no great misfortune" (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#197:May 10, 1823). This apparently did not hinder the post from continuing its trading activities; Khlebnikov reported harvest figures for the following year (1979:31). He also reported that cattle-raising had been a success at Katmai but had been reduced due to a shortage of men (Khlebnikov 1979:46-47). Khlebnikov stated that both Katmai and Sutkhum were somewhat isolated from the other *artels* in the Kodiak region: they were visited only during the spring and summer because of strong winds during the rest of the year (1979:61).

In 1829, Ensign Ivan Vasiliev passed through Katmai during his journey of exploration, and the next spring spent a week there (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#257:October 5, 1830). He received particular help from two inhabitants of Katmai village who were subsequently rewarded with suits of cloth clothing (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#283:May 4, 1831). While there during the fall of 1829, Vasiliev had awaited a boat which was to deliver Chief Manager Chistiakov's orders to him. The boat was wrecked on its way across Shelikof

Strait on November 14 (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#82:May 4, 1830).[22]

As far as can be determined from the written record, Katmai Alutiiqs received their first formal introduction to Russian Orthodoxy in the 1830s.[23] The earliest surviving confessional records for the settlement of Katmai date to 1831, but no Natives (with the exception of the wife of the *baidarshchik*) were confessed at that time. Only two families, both termed "Russians," took confession, for a total of 4 males and 7 females.[24]

In 1831 the *baidarshchik* was Iakov Shangin, who had traveled to Kodiak with Shelikhov in 1783 aboard the *Three Saints* (Shelikhov 1981:116). He remained *baidarshchik* of Katmai until at least 1837 (Arndt and Pierce 1990b :#324:July 10, 1832, #12:January 21, 1833; Pierce

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[22]This indicates that Khlebnikov's statement notwithstanding, the company did on occasion send boats to Katmai during the winter.

[23]The relationship between the Russian-American Company and the Russian Orthodox church was complex. Priests first came to Russian America in part at company expense and in fact the company was required to provide for them according to its Second Charter (RAC 1821). The topic cannot be treated adequately here. Readers are referred to RAC 1821; AOM 1898 and 1899; Tikhmenev 1978; Smith 1980; Gideon 1989; and Oleksa 1993.

[24]All those who confessed in 1831 were listed as "Russians." In fact, Shangin's wife Irina was a Native, probably an Alutiiq of Kodiak; later confessional records for Katmai list their son Stepan and daughter Nadezhda as Creoles. Confessional records were arranged by household, and following the Russian practice of patriliny, the ethnic designation of the household was determined by that of the male head of household.

ms.:#200:May 3, 1837). Even after that time, his surname continued to be represented in Katmai: confessional records indicate that two of his sons, 36-year-old Stepan and 21-year-old Gerasim, lived in Katmai in 1844. Stepan remained in the settlement with his wife and children through at least 1863 (ARCA:Reel 175, 176). The name Shangin is still prominent on the Alaska Peninsula.

In 1834, Ivan Kostylev was mentioned in connection with a position at Katmai at a salary which was to be 400 rubles per year (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#342: August 1834). He was apparently not made manager until 1837. That year he vaccinated 243 Alaska Peninsula Natives against smallpox "using lymph from recently vaccinated Aleuts" (Fortuine 1989:233), thereby preventing a continuation of the devastating epidemic which people in other parts of Russian America already had suffered. Twenty-seven people refused vaccination and all succumbed to the disease (Arndt 1985:8). From 1843 to 1847 Kostylev and his family (he had married Shangin's daughter, the Creole Nadezhda) were the only "Russians" living in Katmai (ARCA:Reel 175).

A series of letters in the Russian-American Company correspondence of the 1840s centered around the deaths of two Kolmakovs, Fëdor, past manager of Katmai and later founder and manager of the Novo-Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, and his son Pëtr. The widows of both men petitioned to be allowed to move to Katmai after their husbands died. Both

had previously lived there and perhaps had originally come from that settlement. Natalia, Fëdor's widow, was denied her petition; the services which were due her as the widow of a long-time company employee would have been too difficult to supply in Katmai (Pierce ms.:#121:April 16, 1843). Pëtr's widow Daria, on the other hand, was given permission to move to Katmai with her two children but was not to expect any help from the Russian-American Company. Her children were given permission to attend school at Sitka for not less than eight years at company expense (Pierce ms.:#173:April 27, 1844). Despite the wishes of the Russian-American Company, both Natalia and Daria had become residents of Katmai by 1851. By 1863, eight Kolmakovs were confessed by the priest during his annual visit to the settlement (ARCA:Reel 176). Like Shangin, the name Kolmakov (today spelled "Kalmakoff") continued to be represented along the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula. For instance, "Nikolai Kalmakof" was *toion* of Katmai in 1904 (Orth 1967:255).

By the mid-19th century, many -- perhaps all -- Katmai residents considered themselves to be Russian Orthodox, for confessional records for the settlement are continuous and numerous after 1843.[25] Kostylev is credited with building

[25]It is difficult to know the extent of the church's impact on the Alutiiq culture of this period, but it is clear that Alutiiqs' profession of Orthodoxy did not entail their wholesale repudiation of traditional animism and

the first chapel in Katmai (AOM 1898:508), an event which coincided with a marked increase in the numbers of local Alutiiqs who took confession and Holy Communion (ARCA:Reel 175).[26] In 1845, for instance, a total of 99 males and 96 females confessed (ARCA:Reel 175). The *American Orthodox Messenger* lists Father Ilia Petelin as the first priest to visit Katmai (AOM 1898:509).[27]

Ivan Kostylev was replaced as manager of Katmai in 1848 by the Russian Pëtr Ivanovich Naumov (ARCA:Reel 175). In 1850, a second chapel was built in the village replacing

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shamanism (cf. *Pugla'allria* story, Chapter V). As late as 1898, an article in the *American Orthodox Messenger* maintained,

> The people here [the Alaska Peninsula settlements] too are religious, but by reason of being very seldom visited by the priest, know very little of religious questions. The now established regular visits by the priest to all settlements of the parish promise to benefit not a little the religious-moral attitude to the good of the parish (AOM 1898:509).

[26]It is possible that the success of the smallpox vaccine Kostylev administered in 1837 played a role in the increase in church membership among the Katmai Alutiiqs. Veniaminov had expected just such an effect among the Tlingits following the epidemic in Sitka two years earlier (Veniaminov 1984:434-5).

[27]Petelin was stationed at Nushagak before 1845, and served as parish priest of the Kodiak Church of the Holy Resurrection of Our Lord between 1845-47. It is possible that he journeyed to Katmai from Nushagak, and likely that he served the village during his years at Kodiak, since Katmai was in the Kodiak Parish. Fr. Petelin's predecessors in Kodiak were Fathers Frumenty Mordovskii, Aleksandr Sokolov, and Pëtr Litvintsev. They also may have served the Alaska Peninsula (cf. Smith 1980:131).

the old one, and soon afterward Father Pëtr Filipovich Kashevarov, younger brother of naval officer Aleksandr Kashevarov and new parish priest for Kodiak, began attending to the Pacific coast settlements (AOM 1898:509). Unrelated to Kodiak Manager Vasilii Kashevarov, Father Pëtr was a Creole whose father had come to Russian America in 1794 (Pierce 1990:217). Kashevarov's confessional records indicate that Naumov continued to serve the company at Katmai until 1858, when the Creole Vissarion Brusenin arrived (ARCA:Reel 176).

In 1863, Brusenin in turn was replaced, likely for pilfering company supplies (Pierce ms.:#158:1863), by the Creole Vasilii Nikiforov. Nikiforov had been educated in St. Petersburg at company expense, then returned to marry Ekaterina Kolmakova, daughter of Pëtr Kolmakov (ARCA:Reel 176; Pierce 1990:251, 386). His son was given permission to attend the seminary at Sitka (Pierce ms.:#211:September 23, 1866). Years later, in 1908, the "Russian" Vasilii Nikiforov financed a new chapel at Chignik (AOM 1908:65).

Russian Impact on the Indigenous Population

The ethnic picture of the Alaska Peninsula, complex and changeable as it had been in precontact days, changed even more after the arrival of the Russians. During the late 18th century, Kodiak Islanders had been transported to

establish an *artel* at Sutkhum south of Katmai (Davydov 1977:192). Hunters from Kodiak were regularly sent to both Sutkhum and Katmai to hunt sea otters for the Russian-American Company (Gideon 1989:64). Hunting parties frequently consisted of mixed groups of Alutiiqs from the lower Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound, of Koniags, Kenaitsy, and Aliaksintsy (Tikhmenev 1979:95; Davydov 1977:194; Gideon 1989:62). Natives of various ethnicities were thus in frequent contact during Russian days. The extent of permanent relocation to and from the Alaska Peninsula is impossible to determine from the surviving records, but, given the relatively small indigenous population, the practice must have had extensive impact.

Further, the few representatives of the Russian-American Company who lived at Katmai during the Russian period influenced not only their immediate neighbors in the settlement but also other peninsula Natives. Davydov noted the Katmai *baidarshchik's* position as a middleman between interior Natives and Russians (1977:192). Later, Iakov Shangin was expected to be able to enlist the labor of Severnovskie men for a company task (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#324: July 10, 1832). At that time, Chief Manager Wrangell expressed his opinion of the Alaska Peninsula Natives. He wrote to the main office of the Russian-American Company in October 1832,

> The latter [Natives who had been driven to the Alaska Peninsula by the Aglurmiut] went to the Aliaska [sic] Peninsula where they live now, became acquainted with the Russians, gave up their barbarian customs, took up hunting, and are now as useful to the company as are the Kad'iak Aleuts. They obey the *baidarshchik* of Katmai *artel*, and many speak Russian (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#460:October 31, 1832).

Corroborating notes by Kodiak Manager Kashevarov indicate that in the 1830s the Katmai *odinochka* had six villages under its jurisdiction with a total population of 436. These included the village of Katmai itself, Ugashik, Kukak, Ikak (one of the two Severnovskie villages; Orth 1967:841), Alikhanovskoe (possibly Alinnak, another Severnovskie village, or Alagnak on the Kvichak River, no longer inhabited), and Naugikaksoe (most likely Nauklak, a now abandoned village which was located southeast of Severnovsky in the interior of the peninsula) (Kashevarov ms.).

One demographic event had a profound effect on the ethnic picture of Russian America and on Alutiiq ethnicity itself: the growth of the Creole class. Black (1990) reports that by 1817 the Russian-American Company was concerned with the increase in the number of children of Native mothers and Russian fathers, and with the implications that increase had for the future company work force and employees' loyalty to Russia (1990:143). Largely through a program of education and employment, the Russian

government, through the Russian-American Company, sought to create "a social stratum with loyalties both to Alaskan land and to Russian culture and state" (Black 1990:151). Specifically, the home office of the Russian-American Company sought to augment its workforce:

> The lack of Russian people in the colonies can be compensated for. . . . Creoles, brought up and educated at the Company's cost and effort, thereafter employed in various capacities, or carrying on its business, can obtain food and livelihood (Fedorova 1973:210-1, quoting Russian archival sources).

The second and third RAC charters (1821 and 1844 respectively) detailed the rights, privileges, and duties of the Creole populace of Russian America. These included the right to a free education at company expense provided that the individual so educated worked for the company afterward for a period of 10 (RAC Second Charter, Paragraph 41) or 15 years (RAC Third Charter, #243).

Creoles had undoubtedly entered the Katmai picture by 1818 when Fëdor Kolmakov was manager of the *artel*. His wife, Natalia, was a Native, perhaps from Katmai itself, and their children were Creoles. Pierce reports "the names of Kolmakov's many children are difficult to establish" (Pierce 1990:249), but it is certain that some of his descendents remained at Katmai where their names continued to appear on confessional rolls and United States Census

records. Similarly, as was noted above, several of the Creole children of Iakov Shangin, though probably not born at Katmai, continued to live there after their father's return to Kodiak. In addition, the last two Russian-American Company *baidarshchiks* of Katmai were Creoles.

Although all Creoles in Russian America were legally and socially of the same class, there were at least two different types of Creole experience in the colony. Those Creoles who came to majority in small settlements like Katmai undoubtedly received their primary educations from their fathers. Some, like Pëtr Kolmakov and Vasilii Nikiforov, were then sent to Sitka or St. Petersburg for further training (Pierce 1990:250, 386). Those who took advantage of the Russian-American Company's policy of education at company expense subsequently left their early homes in outlying settlements like Katmai to serve in other parts of Alaska. Some of their children returned to the settlements, as did Pëtr Kolmakov's widow and children (Pierce ms.:#173: April 27, 1844; ARCA:Reel 176).

There were other first-generation Creoles, like Stepan Shangin, who apparently were not formally educated by the company, but who stayed in the villages they had been born into or had adopted as their homes. They married local women, and their descendents stayed on the peninsula. They lived like their Native relatives as hunters or crew chiefs for the company, not as managers. They continued to be

designated "Creole" in confessional records and presumably considered themselves as such. While these Creoles were integral members of their villages, they altered village life somewhat. Although mid-19th century records are silent on the question of language dominance and literacy, testimony from the end of the century indicates that a number of hunters were literate and bilingual, keeping those skills alive on the Alaska Peninsula even in the absence of formal educational institutions.[28] Furthermore, Creoles had relatives in other Alaskan settlements, especially on Kodiak and Afognak Islands, through whom they kept the connection between peninsula and island active.

Meanwhile, elements of the precontact shamanism, religion, and ceremonialism persisted within the Christianity practiced by the Alutiiq residents. Collectors of Native artifacts were able to obtain masks, drums, and shamanic regalia throughout the 19th century, though some items may have been made for the benefit of the collectors (cf. Crowell 1992). I was told of one Perryville man, deceased less than 30 years, who was

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[28]In the 1880 census report, Petroff (1900) noted that 103 Creoles in the Kodiak parish were reported (by church authorities) to be literate, most in the Alutiiq language but a few also in Russian (1900:84). Stafeev, Alaska Commercial Company manager at Douglas, noted that there was someone literate in every Douglas household in 1892 (Stafeev ms.: July, 1892). Of the entire Alutiiq population of the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula in 1900, 30 out of 98 Native hunters, or 31%, were literate (1900 U.S. Census).

considered a shaman until the end of his life. Even today some hunters perform traditional non-Christian hunting ceremonies after killing a bear. This and other aspects of the syncretic nature of Alutiiq Orthodoxy are considered in greater detail below.

Alutiiq Ethnicity in Russian Days

Effects of Company and Church. During Russian times, individual mobility continued to be high, but until 1818 when impressment ended it was largely involuntary. Men were sent far from their home villages to hunt and theoretically were allowed to return to those villages at the end of the season. In practice, populations in small settlements on the peninsula declined, partly because some men never returned home, having perished while working for the company. Many families undoubtedly moved into the *artel* settlements; indeed whole villages relocated to be closer to them. Outlying Native villages also eventually were brought into the circles of the *artels'* influence. At first, individual hunters traveled to the posts with their furs. Later, the men accepted an ongoing relationship with, or (before 1818) were impressed into service for, the Russian-American Company.

The Russian fur trade also brought Yup'ik and Alutiiq populations into frequent and peaceful contact with one

another. This was especially the case when the village of Katmai was the only trading center serving the Alaska Peninsula and Bristol Bay areas for 20 years before the Nushagak post was established. There the Russian-American Company provided predictable, regular, and repetitive occasions for interethnic economic activity under established rules. That dialects were divergent and the Russians continued to differentiate between the Aglurmiut, Kiatagmiut, Kuskokwigmiut and "Katmai Aleuts" suggest that the peoples themselves retained a feeling of distinctiveness from each other throughout this period.

Meanwhile, since Alutiiq men were occupied hunting or trapping for the company during much of each year, they undoubtedly initiated fewer interethnic interactions at an individual or family level than in the past. Instead, through the practice of dealing with the village *toion*, the Russian-American Company encouraged interactions at the village level.[29]

The existence on the one hand of an Alutiiq social *entity* comprising all speakers of that language on the Alaska Peninsula, and an Alutiiq *identity* held in common by them all, thus became possible during the Russian era. The ground was laid for modern ethnicity for the first time

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[29]See Fall 1987) for a discussion of the effects of the Russian *toion* system on indigenous Dena'ina leadership and roles and inter-group social relationships.

through the Russian-American Company and the Russian Orthodox church, which together provided an overarching structure more formal than the common language and kinship which had existed before. In fact, no Alutiiq entity -- no confederation or recognizable group of any sort -- was ever achieved and, as I discuss below, the emergence of a common Alutiiq identity required an additional element of interethnic friction which occurred during the American period.

Creoles and Alutiiq Ethnicity. Previously Alutiiqs had made distinctions between themselves and outsiders, but during the Russian days the outsiders came to live among them permanently. These newly resident outsiders included Koniags, a handful of Russians, and their Creole children. There are indications that while ethnic mixing resulted in a strengthening of ethnic boundaries in the population centers of Russian America (Kodiak, Unalaska, Sitka), an opposite result occurred in small settlements like Katmai. For one thing, "town" and "village" Creoles lived very different lives, the former apparently more oriented toward Russian culture while the latter modeled their lives after Native practices. Explorer Lavrentiy Zagoskin noted in 1842 that Creoles living in New Archangel [Sitka] were citified, while those "from an outlying district [know] how to sew [their] own clothing and boots, how to track and bag

game, make nets, set a dragnet, etc." like their Native neighbors (1967:83-5).

In addition, Russian observers reported that the "town" Creoles were not always accepted socially by their Russian coworkers, nor did their Native neighbors consider them insiders. For instance, correspondence between Chief Manager Murav'ev and the Main Office of the Russian-American Company in 1823 concerned the elevation of a particular Creole to a position of authority. Murav'ev had claimed that Creoles did not command proper respect from Russians and so declined to promote this promising individual, despite company instructions. The Main Office agreed that in this case the individual in question could be assigned to an alternative position with an equal salary, but that in the future, "all Russians should be informed that, under the new charter, Creoles are regarded as burghers and are free to attain the ranks of officers" (Arndt and Pierce 1990a:#173, March 13, 1823).

By the 1860s many Creoles had assumed positions of authority in the company, but negative attitudes about the working class Creoles persisted. Russian-American Company visitor P. N. Golovin wrote letters home from New Arkhangel to his mother complaining of the Creoles' profanity, "laziness," "crude natures," and the illiteracy of the women (1983:84, 116). In his formal report commissioned by the company, Golovin spoke at length about the Creoles'

demoralization due to their low status among both Russians and Natives (1979:18). As directed by his employers, he argued for the abolition of the privileged Creole status.

While Creoles were often differentiated from both Russians and Natives in the towns of Russian America, this was not always the case in small villages or outposts. In many circumstances, resident Alutiiqs seem to have fully accepted their mixed-ancestry cousins into Katmai society, primarily to the extent that the Creoles activated kin ties, spoke the local language, and exemplified a similar lifestyle. This was particularly true of those who remained in the village rather than attending company school elsewhere, and who subsequently chose to stay in Katmai as adults. The Kolmakovs and Shangins are examples of Creole families which by the middle of the 19th century had became integrated into Alutiiq society on the peninsula.

Similarly, the Alutiiq immigrants from Kodiak became integral members of peninsula Alutiiq society. They were not differentiated in confession records from other Alutiiqs, nor do today's descendents of Katmai inhabitants recognize ancestry from 19th century Koniags as distinct from *Qa'irwigmiut* [people from Katmai]. Some Kodiak immigrants were probably already related to the peninsula Alutiiqs (cf. Polonskii n.d.), others married into local families, and all spoke the indigenous language.

Even the Russian-American Company *baidarshchiks* -- both Russians and Creoles -- were to varying degrees accepted as community members. There were never more than one or two ethnic Russians living at Katmai at a time, and most were probably viewed as short-timers. They were integrated into the life of the community to varying degrees depending on their facility with the Alutiiq language, local affinal kinship ties (through marraige with Katmai women), and their personal characteristics. Those who did not have local relatives, being vastly outnumbered by the Alutiiqs, would have had to live under the prevailing social system or keep to themselves.

The fact that Creoles and their Russian fathers were accepted as part of Alutiiq society to any extent can be traced to traditional attitudes about the nature of kinship and social alliance. The Alutiiq reliance on kinship as a societal organizing principle is documented in both historic testimony (cf. Davydov 1977; Gideon 1989; Merck 1980; Holmberg 1985) and through fieldwork.[30] Extrapolating from early historic and ethnographic evidence in southwestern and northern Alaska, I conclude that the

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[30]Today kinship is invoked whenever possible. For instance, people generally call their elders by the appropriate kinship term rather than given name. I heard one woman who had married a man from Afognak Island tell her 40-year-old nephew, "Don't call him [her husband] Alvin! He's 'Uncle' to you!" Even I was provided with fictive kin groups in Chignik Lake and Perryville after residents had decided to which families I seemed to belong.

traditional system allowed for kin augmentation -- the increase in the number of related people one treated as kin -- and extension -- the incorporation of non-kin as kin (cf. Burch 1975:51-61). These principles are well illustrated in Guemple's discussion of the Belcher Island Inuit of Canada:

> kinship is the idiom of social relatedness but one that is sufficiently flexible to permit a reallocation of existing kinsmen into new social roles, even when these violate genealogical criteria. Moreover, it is a system which permits the ready incorporation of "strangers", whether genealogical connections can be found to support that assimilation or not (1971:73).

He continues,

> . . . social relatedness is a matter to be worked out by the participants in social encounter, and . . . the major criteria to be used are first, that people must actively participate in the system to be counted as kinsmen in a meaningful way, and second, that those who enter the field of face-to-face relations must be treated as kinsmen whether genealogical connections exist to support the claim or not (Guemple 1971:75).

These three principles, the primacy of kin relationships, flexibility in determining the specific kin role an individual plays, and the requirement that kin roles must be continually activated to be considered existent, had operated in Alutiiq dealings with distantly- or non-related people in the earliest days of European

contact long before the issue of Creoles arose. During protohistoric times social alliances with outsiders -- in the form of trade and warfare -- were flexible and changing. They depended on judgments of friendship or enmity and recognition, denial, or ignorance of kin relationships rather than on cultural or racial origin.

Even toward their enemies' wives and children, Alutiiqs could choose between enmity or social incorporation depending on circumstances. Warriors were said to kill and torture enemy elders and adult males regularly and to enslave women and children (Black 1977:86; Gideon 1989:44), but they also contracted sexual alliances with the women. Davydov reported that the capture of women might be the primary aim of a particular battle (1977:162). Burch (1975) found that in northern Alaska sexual union was the primary means one had of establishing positive relationships with "outsiders" (1975:59). In fact, he reported,

> The act of copulation, and it alone, established a marriage in aboriginal Northwest Alaska. Conversely, there was no act of sexual intercourse (outside of incest) that could not establish some kind of institutionalized marital relationship (Burch 1975:47).

Burch (1975), like Guemple (1971) specified that kin relationships had to be activated to be considered existent; thus not every instance of sexual intercourse

necessarily resulted in the establishment of kin ties. In this respect Wrangell's statement, "I will only remark that the Chugach and Kadiaks have *intermingled* with the American tribes, whose women they steal" (1980:59; emphasis added) is relevant. The statement suggests that some women were incorporated into communities' affairs in the roles of concubines or wives and mothers, and that their children, regardless of matrilineal ethnicity, were considered members of the community.

The practice of defining others by reference to kinship roles was easily accomplished in Russian-era Katmai with both Russian and Creole residents.[31] Furthermore, in most ways the Creole children of the *baidarshchiks* came to be indistinguishable from their Alutiiq cousins. Physical differences between Creoles and Alutiiqs decreased through the generations as children of Creoles married children of Alutiiqs. Indeed, by the turn of the 20th century most "Aleut" residents of Katmai had at least one Russian ancestor (cf. marriage records, ARCA Reels 23-24). Further, all inhabitants of Katmai -- Alutiiq, Creole, and Russian alike -- belonged to the Russian Orthodox church. The Creoles spoke Alutiiq as did other local inhabitants,

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[31]See Chapter VII for a more complete discussion of Eskimo alliance. Some scholars, Fienup-Riordan, for instance, argue that calling the Eskimo social structure "kinship-based" obscures other important forms of alliance (1983:141).

although many also spoke Russian.[32] Finally, those Creoles who lived in Katmai as adults (e.g., Stepan Shangin) served as hunters for the trading companies like their Alutiiq neighbors. The *de jure* difference between Natives and Creoles did not translate to *de facto* differences in villages like Katmai.

This being said, Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs still perceived what now appear almost stereotypical differences between themselves and Creoles. Although observable physical differences decreased with time through intermarriage, residents still talk about "wavy-haired, blue- or grey-eyed Russians" (Creoles) who lived on the peninsula (but see the discussion on physical attributes in Chapter VII). According to oral tradition, perhaps the most important perceived difference between Creoles and Alutiiqs was the Creoles' bilingualism and literacy. When people speak of "Russians" today, they invariably refer to their erudition, cleverness, and multilingualism.

Interestingly, not all who were of mixed ancestry are remembered as "Russians," but nearly all who were literate, and virtually all who spoke Russian, are so remembered.[33]

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[32]I was told of many "Russians" (Creoles) who, even in the 20th century, were trilingual speakers of Russian, Alutiiq, and English. Furthermore, a number of testimonies cite Creoles who served as translators for Russian Orthodox priests (eg. AOM 1896:57; AOM 1902:431).

[33]Black (1990) points out, "under the Russian regime neither the term 'creole' nor the term 'colonial citizen' were racial categories" (1990:146); and "by no means did

Indeed, that designation is ascribed to individuals based on their lifestyle choices -- their personal, linguistic, cultural, and social -- rather than phenotypic characteristics. Twentieth century "Russianness" -- and by extension 19th century "Creoleness" -- is therefore only vaguely hereditary: Nikolai Kalmakoff, grandfather of Doris Lind (a different Nikolai Kalmakoff from the 1904 *toion* mentioned above), and Innokenty Kalmakoff, father of Artemie Kalmakoff, were "Russians." -- but their children were not.

In summary, during the Russian period Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs became acquainted with a new foreign ethnicity, the Russians, to add to *Taya'uqs* and Yup'iks. They accepted local Russians and Creoles into their society as situations allowed. But regardless of the degree of *social* incorporation which the Creoles in Katmai experienced, in the end their *cultural* incorporation was extensive: the Alutiiq identity configuration grew around many elements imported by the Creoles' Russian fathers, eventually becoming, like the Creoles themselves, heir to diverse traditions. The Russian era Alutiiq identity configuration came to include ideas from Russian Orthodoxy, an economy

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this number [those in the Creole estate] account for all persons of mixed ancestry, nor were all those designated creole of mixed ancestry" (1990:152).

based on trading furs for goods and money, and some degree of facility with the Russian language. Elements of the "traditional" culture were also retained, such as particular subsistence techniques, child-raising strategies and the overarching kinship paradigm, ceremonial practices, and the precontact cosmology.

The American Period On The Alaska Peninsula

The 19th Century

Shortly after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, a young American army officer, Eli Huggins, was sent to Kodiak. Before leaving for Alaska he was warned about the belligerance of Alaska Peninsula natives. He was instructed "to keep in check and overawe, by an exhibition of military force, the more barbarous natives of Kenay and Alaska Peninsula" (Pierce in Huggins 1981:viii). If directed toward the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, the advice was unnecessary. A generation earlier, peninsula Alutiiqs were already considered a dependent people (Wrangell 1980:14) who had given up "their barbarian customs" (Arndt and Pierce 1990b:#460:October 31, 1832). But Huggins' instructions indicate that a new era had begun in the relationships between Natives and non-Natives, and that many of the old understandings would be challenged.

Alutiiq Economic Activity in the 19th Century. Despite the change in sovereignty, life for Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs altered little for many years after the purchase. Until the turn of the century the fur trade continued much as it had during Russian days, though with American rather than Russian traders.

When the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, Katmai was the only operating Russian-American Company post on the peninsula. That post, along with other assets of the Russian-American Company, was purchased in 1867 by Hutchinson, Kohl and Company, a predecessor of the Alaska Commercial Company (Kitchener 1954:32). Kitchener implies that other peninsula posts were operating at the time of the sale as well: "From Kodiak, Alaska Commercial continued the fur trading headquarters and substations which included . . . Douglas, Kugac Bay, . . . Katmai" (1954:138). Neither Douglas nor Kugac [Kukak] is mentioned in Russian-American Company records, so it is almost certain that those two trading posts were established by the Hutchinson, Kohl and Company several years after the initial purchase.

Katmai continued to be the center for fur trading operations on the Alaska Peninsula during the first decades of American rule. When the Frenchman Alphonse L. Pinart traveled along the peninsula in 1871, he stopped at Katmai, reporting that the settlement had a population of about 150

Koniags, with one white man, the trader. The post did "a fairly large fur business with the villages in the interior and on Bristol Bay" (Pinart 1873b:16).

Six years later, A. B. Francis, the trader at Katmai, was instructed by the Alaska Commercial Company home office on outfitting Katmai sea otter hunting crews. He was told that each hunter was to receive one pound of tea, five pounds of sugar, two pounds of leaf tobacco, and a peck of flour, "and the whole in one bulk to be given to the chief of the party and the party to buy from the outfit out of the skins they catch" (ACC:August 7, 1877). Thus the Alaska Commercial Company moved into the niche already established by the Russian-American Company, continuing to operate within the same system of hunting crews, crew chiefs, and company store. Villages still interacted with company officials through a *toion* or village chief, apparently chosen from among respected men with a great deal of input from the itinerate priest (cf. AOM 1902:432; cf. also VanStone 1967:54-5 for a discussion of the methods by which *toions* were chosen in the Nushagak area during Russian days). As during the Russian era, provisions for hunting trips were to be purchased from the company by the hunters out of the proceeds of the hunt.

Peninsula Alutiiqs continued to interact with many of the same people they had dealt with during Russian days. In at least one instance, the Alaska Commercial Company

official, Vladimir Stafeev of the Douglas post, was a Russian who had chosen to stay on in Alaska after the sale. No schools were built on the Alaska Peninsula until the 1920s, so the English language was neither promoted nor required in daily life until then. The Americans who carried on commerce in the area understood the importance of the Russian language: Father Harry Kaiakokonok of Perryville explained,

> [Foster, the owner of the Kaflia Bay saltery in 1912] speak a little Russian too! All those people that lives in Kodiak speak little Russian. That the language Kodiak used to use -- even the Kodiak natives hardly speak their dialect, mostly in Russian. That's why this Foster guy speak a little Russian too, so the people can understand whenever they inquire for something (1975b).

Alfred B. Shanz, who gathered information on the Nushagak district for the 1890 census, reported,

> The fact that the territory is now owned by the United States cuts no figure and many of the native members of the church are not even aware of that fact. The natives of the north peninsula villages divide mankind into 2 classes, Russians and non-Russians, and to all of the latter class they apply the generic term Americanski, no matter whether the individual specimen be a German, a Scandinavian, a Finlander, or a Kanaka. One unable to speak any Russian whatever is looked upon as pitifully ignorant and is treated with contempt (1893:96).

The Russian Orthodox Church in the 19th Century. Russian Orthodox priests continued their yearly trips to the villages, speaking Russian and using Church Slavonic in services (and, in the case of Creole priests, speaking Alutiiq as well). The Creole Pëtr Kashevarov, the second traveling priest, died in 1879 and was replaced by Nikolai Rysev, who served at least through 1883 (Pierce 1990:220; AOM 1898:509; ARCA:Reel 181). Pëtr Dobrovolskii ministered to Katmai and other villages along the peninsula during part of the 1880s (ACC/Douglas: August 15,1885). These Creoles were followed by a Pole, Aleksandr Martysh (ARCA:Reel 181). Douglas trader Stafeev was furious when Martysh forbade laymen the performance of certain offices of the church and the wearing of church vestments. He fumed that no one would come to church, adding, "After all there is someone literate in every household and he can read the Hours at home!" (Stafeev ms.: July 12, 1892 [old style, June 30]).

Subsequent priests with responsibility for the Pacific coast villages were Tikhon Shalamov, Nikolai Kashevarov, and Vasilii Martysh. During the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century, the priests attempted to visit peninsula chapels each year, although weather sometimes prevented them from completing their rounds (e.g., AOM 1896:119).

The church's continued impact during the American period was evident in the level of literacy which obtained among peninsula Alutiiqs (noted above) and in the chapels that marked each settlement. In 1876, the first chapel in the settlement of Douglas was built and a new one was completed in 1890 or 1893 (AOM 1898:508; ARCA:Reel 180). In 1877, a third chapel was built at Katmai, following the first built in the 1840s and the second constructed in 1850 (AOM 1898:508).[34] Another was built in 1901, then refurbished in 1904 (AOM 1902:433; ARCA:Reel 180). Chapels were also built or repaired at Wrangell[35] in 1884, 1895, and 1905 (AOM 1898:508; ARCA:Reel 180), Mitrofania in 1889 and 1904 (ARCA:Reel 132), Kanatak in 1890 and 1910 (ARCA:Reel 180), and apparently at Kukak (Stafeev refers to "Kukak church funds" on December 11 [old style, November 29], 1889). After 1896, the seat for the parish which included the Pacific coast villages of the Alaska Peninsula was relocated to Afognak, north of Kodiak (AOM 1898:509).

Alaska Peninsula Villages. Katmai is well represented in the written record of the 19th century American period,

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[34]It is probable that, like Russians elsewhere in Russian America, either Kolmakov or Shangin had built a small chapel in Katmai during his tenure as *baidarshchik*, but there is no record to that effect.

[35]A short-lived settlement on the Alaska Peninsula, this Wrangell should not be confused with the more well-known town in Southeastern Alaska.

both because it was the site of an Alaska Commerical Company post and store and because it was located at the terminus of a portage across the Alaska Peninsula. Descriptions of the settlement appeared in several popular books and articles of the day. For instance, a series in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newsletter* about a trip through the gold fields of Alaska ended with a portage across the Alaska Peninsula and a wild sled ride down the mountains into Katmai (Wells 1891:106). Ten years later Rex Beach (1940) provided a description of the village and an apparently fictionalized description of the company manager, the Creole Aleksandr Petelin. Beach described him as

> a globular, cross-eyed little half-breed Russian. His name was Petellin and he read our letter of introduction by rubbing his nose back and forth across each line. Petellin's English had almost rusted out from disuse (1940:63).

In fact, Aleksandr Ivanovich Petelin[36] stands out as particularly influential in Katmai during the early

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[36]Aleskandr Petelin was probably a distant relative of the above-mentioned priest, Ilia Petelin. Aleksandr

> was born on August 25, 1855 (at St. Paul Harbor on Kodiak Island). He was the son of a Russian feldsher of the former Kodiak hospital under the Russian-American Company (AOM 1916:572).

Orthodox baptismal records show no indication of a direct link between Aleksandr and Ilia, who were a generation apart in age. Aleksandr's parents were Ioann

American period. He was sent there as manager of the Alaska Commercial Company post in 1893 (Stafeev ms.: August 6, 1893 [old style, July 25]), staying until the store was closed by the company in 1902. During his tenure, he acted as psalmist for the church, served as Russian/Alutiiq interpreter for the visiting priests, kept the church in good physical and economic order, and built a chapel in 1901 from shipwrecked lumber and purchased material (AOM 1896:57; AOM 1902:433). After returning to his home on Kodiak from Katmai, Petelin studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1905. He was stationed at the Afognak church, a position which required him to journey yearly across Shelikof Strait to the churches on the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula (AOM 1916:572-3). Father Petelin was also involved in events surrounding the 1912 Katmai eruption.

While Katmai remained preeminent among peninsula trading locales until the 20th century, the first decades of the American period also saw an increase in the number of populated villages along the Pacific Coast. By 1876, there were enough faithful living at Cape Douglas north of Katmai to warrant the building of an Orthodox chapel. The village had been established by Katmai and Savonoski

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[Ivan] and Ekaterina of Kodiak (ARCA:Reel 23), while Ilia was from the large Unalaska family of Semën Petelin.

[Servernovskie] residents (AOM 1898:508), perhaps in conjunction with the Alaska Commercial Company which opened a post there shortly afterward. The earliest surviving day book for the post at Douglas dates from 1878. The Western Fur and Trading Company (WFT) also maintained a post at Douglas for a short time; an account book for 1882 has survived (Oswalt 1967:30). The WFT ceased its Alaskan operations in 1883 (Hussey 1971:190).

The company "day" and log books for the posts list weather reports, statistics on catches, and, occasionally, personal glimpses into life in the settlement. For instance, an April entry in the Douglas log book states,

> This day schooner *Kodiak* arrived and discharged and left for Kodiak. Also heard that the Schooner *Flying Scud* [sic] had not arrived at Kodiak since leaving here November 14, 1886 with my wife and five children on board (ACC/Douglas: April 16, 1887).

The entries report deaths and sicknesses in the settlements. On May 5, 1888, for instance, the Douglas trader wrote, "People all sick here" (ACC/Douglas: May 5, 1888). An enticing clue to intervillage relationships is provided in an 1893 entry, "2 men arrivet [sic] from Inland Village for Douglas men partners" (ACC/Douglas: May 8, 1893). Intercommunity, and perhaps interethnic trading or hunting partnerships were thus an established practice at that time.

The log books indicate the specific villages with whom the posts traded. The following list of places visited or from which visitors came, all mentioned in log books within a two-year period, indicates the mobility of peninsula hunters: Cold [Puale] Bay (ACC/Katmai: May 5, July 18,1891); Egegik (ACC/Katmai: August 9, 1891); Kukak (ACC/Douglas: July 9, 16, 1892); "Pahliak" [Paugvik, or South Naknek] (ACC/Douglas: July 4, 6, 8, 10, 19, 1892); "Aio" [Hallo] Bay (ACC/Douglas: July 16, 18, 27, 1892); Afognak (ACC/Douglas: August 2, 1892); Ikuk Island (this probably refers to the village of Ekuk, on the shore of Nushagak Bay) (ACC/Douglas: November 7, 1892); Iliamna (ACC/Douglas: May 14, 1893).

The records of the Douglas post are greatly enlivened by the manager who resided there from 1889 until 1895. He was a Russian who had married a Dena'ina woman and had chosen to stay in Alaska after its sale to the United States. Vladimir Stafeev wrote not only in the log book in his halting, misspelled English, but more eloquently, passionately, and frankly in his diary in Russian. He recounted the accidents, disappointments, marriages, and general goings-on of the settlement. He also described Native visitors to Douglas in his diary. Besides those locations noted above, his entries mentioned Savonoski (Stafeev ms:April 1889, January, February 1890), Aglurmiut who came to trade (April 1889, February 1890), Ekwok (a

village on the Nushagak River; February 1890), Kamyshak Bay (June 1889), Katmai (October, December 1889, February, July 1890), and Nushagak (August 1891).

Stafeev lived at Douglas without his family. The inconvenience and loneliness of this six-year arrangement may have contributed to the peevish tone of his diaries. But beyond his own unhappiness, there seems to have been cause for concern in the Douglas settlement of the 1890s. Stafeev reported frequent instances of general drunkenness. He complained about the drastically declining fur catches, of the evil influence of American fishermen, of fatal beatings of women by their husbands, of low morals in Douglas ("Oh Douglas, Douglas, a second Pompeii!" (Stafeev ms.: July 5, 1890 [old style, June 23]), an ironic statement in light of the village's total burial in a 1912 volcanic eruption). On the other hand, he noted that people continued to put up winter supplies of fish, starring and church services took place regularly, and literacy maintained a stronghold in the community. His ambivalent feelings toward his post were highlighted after a brief summer visit to his daughter's Kodiak home. He admitted, "I, the hermit, became bored immediately and wished myself back in Douglas" (Stafeev ms.: August, 14, 1892 [old style, August 2]).

Other villages appeared during the American period. The following table, based on U. S. Census information,

Table 1: Population Figures (based on the U. S. Census) for Pacific Coast Alaska Peninsula Settlements: 1880 to 1910

1880	Pop.	1890	Pop.	1900	Pop.	1910	Pop.
Ashivak	46	Cape Douglas	85	Douglas	72	Douglas	45
Kukak	37						
Katmai	218	Katmai	132	Katmai	81	Katmai	62
						Cold Bay [Puale]	11
		Kanatak	26	Portage Bay	27	Kanatak	23
Kuyukak	18	Wrangell Bay	62	Port Wrangell	57		
Sutkhoon	25						
Kaluiak	30	Chignik Bay	193	Chignik Bay	329	Chignik Bay	565
				Chignik River	195		
Mitro-fania	22	Mitro-fania	48			Mitro-fania	27
Total	**396**		**546**		**761**		**733**

lists Pacific coast Alaska Peninsula settlements and their respective populations over a period of 30 years. The villages are arranged geographically from northeast (Ashivak) to southwest (Mitrofania). In several cases the names by which census workers designated settlements changed, the result of an increasing preference for English over Native names, ignorance on the part of the census takers, and the fact that the locations of settlement changed within general locales (e.g., Kaluiak and Chignik Bay are not precisely the same site although near each other). Population growth and decline and the disappearance of whole communities indicate the high level of transcience on the Alaska Peninsula at the turn of the century.

The Census of 1880, based on a combination of actual counts and second-hand reports of population, divides Alutiiq areas of the Alaska Peninsula among two districts, Kodiak and Nushagak. Seven Creole and Eskimo settlements (there is no designation for "Aleut") were listed for the Pacific coast of the peninsula in the Kodiak district (Petroff 1900:89). These included Ashivak (in the vicinity of Douglas, if not the settlement itself), Kukak, Katmai, Kuyukak, Sutkhoon (Sutkhum), Kaluiak (near the present town

of Chignik Bay), and Mitrofania[37] (Figure 2) (Petroff 1900:89).

On the Bering Sea side in the Nushagak district three "Aleut" villages -- Mashikh (more correctly Masriq, the present-day Meshik at Port Heiden), Oogashik [Ugashik], and Oonaugashuk [Unangashik, just south of Port Heiden] -- were reported (Petroff 1900:74). Peninsula Alutiiqs today consider these to have been Alutiiq, not *Taya'uq* (Unangan) villages, despite Petroff's claims that they "are of the Aleutian tribe," as was Port Moller (Petroff 1900:83). Finally, the census report listed the population of Ik-khagmute [the Severnovskoe settlement of Ikak] but not its ethnic designation (Petroff 1900:74; Orth 1967:447).

The changes in population and location of several Alutiiq settlements are instructive for a picture of turn-of-the-century Alutiiq life. Kukak Bay on the Pacific coast had first appeared in Langsdorff's 1806 description of the village of Toujoujak and seems to have been continuously inhabited since that time (Orth 1967:549). The village of Kukak boasted a population of 37 in 1880, and had its own Alaska Commerical store by 1891 (ACC/Katmai: February 19, 1891). Kukak was rumored, in 1893, to be the future location of a new store to be run by the rival North American Company (Stafeev ms.: January,

[37]Located near, but not on, the island of the same name.

1893). It appears that the village was not inhabited after 1895, for that summer Father Tikhon Shalamov traveled from Kodiak to Kukak to perform his priestly duties, only to learn on his arrival that all the inhabitants had moved to Douglas (AOM 1896:119).

Sutkhum had been an abandoned site when Pinart visited it in 1871 (Pinart 1873:14). In 1880, 25 people were said to be living there (Petroff 1900:89). For a brief time, at least from 1882 to 1887, the Alaska Commercial Company ran a post at Sutkhum (Oswalt 1967:24). Population figures for the village are not given in any census subsequent to 1880.

Kaluiak, near present-day Chignik, was home to only 30 people in 1880 (Petroff 1900:89). Within the next decade the population ballooned to 193 after the opening of the first fish processing plant in 1888 (Moser 1899:165; Porter 1893:4). Today the area is the population center for the entire Pacific coast of the peninsula.

Mitrofania, the southernmost of the Alutiiq villages reported in the 1880 census, had been founded that year by Kodiak immigrants. United States Navy Lt. Z. L. Tanner reported, "Sea-otter hunting is their chief occupation, but cod, halibut, and salmon are also taken for home consumption" (1888:36-7). Petroff's census of 1880 listed the entire population of 22 as Creole (Petroff 1900:89). In 1889, Mitrofania's first chapel was built (ARCA:Reel 132), and by the next year's census the population had

grown to 48. The chapel was repaired in 1904 and was last referred to in a 1926 report in the Alaska Orthodox Messenger (AOM 1926:119).

Kuyukak (a former resident asserts its name was actually "Kuyuyukak") was located in Wrangell Bay, south of Katmai (Orth 1967:549). The actual settlement of Wrangell (also spelled "Wrangel" and sometimes called "Port Wrangel"), established in 1882, was the site of an Alaska Commercial Company post and store by at least 1884 (AOM 1898:508; Oswalt 1967:27). William J. Fisher, who collected ethnographic specimens for the Smithsonian Institution from 1880 until 1885, was the Alaska Commercial Company's trader at Wrangell between 1884 and 1889 (ACC/Wrangell). He had married Anna Nikiforova, daughter of the former Katmai trader Vasilii Nikiforov. Wrangell's first chapel was built in 1884 (AOM 1898:508), followed by a second in 1895 (ARCA:Reel 180)[38]

The United States Census of 1890, the first to be based on actual population counts, revealed a few changes in Alutiiq peninsula settlements: There was one new village, an old one had disappeared, and the names but not the general locations of others had changed. Pacific coast Alutiiq villages listed (they were called "Indian" in this

[38]One page reproduced in the church archives states that the chapel was built in 1875; this is apparently a mistake, as subsequent records on the same reel indicate the later date.

census) were Cape Douglas,[39] Katmai, a new village called Kanatak located near the Pacific end of the Ugashik River portage across the Alaska Peninsula, Wrangell Bay,[40] Chignik Bay (Kaluiak had apparently been swallowed by the larger fish processing settlement), and Mitrofania (Porter 1893:4). Kanatak had been founded by "resettled people from the interior of [the] Alaska [Peninsula], namely from the Nushagak parish" (AOM 1898:508). These interior people were most likely from Ugashik or Egegik; Alutiiq elders today recall the yearly trips they made each spring from Kanatak to the two cannery towns to take part in their rich fisheries.

Meshik, Ugashik, and Unangashik are again listed for the Bering Sea side of the peninsula, the people at Ugashik being termed ambiguously,

> Aleut half-bred type . . . , a people who speak a language with marked dialectic differences from the Eskimo, and who show the peculiar domestic traits which characterize the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands (Shanz 1893:93).

Savonoski is mysteriously missing from the 1890 census (Porter 1893:5), perhaps because the people were fishing in Bristol Bay when the population was counted. Sutkhum had

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[39]The settlement at Cape Douglas is not called "Ashivak" in this census as it had been in the previous one.

[40]Not called "Kuyukak" as it had been previously.

become merely a summer hunting camp for Wrangell Bay Natives (Porter 1893:73).

By 1890, the Pacific coast had become home for a number of non-Native men, many of whom, according to the 1910 census (U.S. Census, Roll 1750), later married local women and settled down to raise families. The census report of 1890 states,

> Many of the bays which indent the coast between Katmai and Wrangell Bay are occupied temporarily by white men as hunting grounds, especially in the winter season, but there is no permanent settlement to be found until we reach [Wrangell Bay] where 62 Koniags live and hunt and fish (Porter 1893:73).

Two other settlements were established along the Pacific coastline during the 1890s. The first, Cold [Puale] Bay, was noted in Alaska Commercial Company day books as early as 1891 as a hunting area for local and Iliamna Natives (Kiatagmiut or Dena'ina) (ACC/Katmai: May 5, July 18, 1891). Manager Stafeev issued provisions to Cold Bay from the Douglas post (Stafeev ms.: June 1894), and Father Tikhon Shalamov visited the settlement in 1895 and reported that it was used as a hunting camp for Katmai Natives in both summer and winter (AOM 1896:57). By 1902, Cold Bay had apparently been taken over by American (Caucasian) oil miners. Father Vasilii Martysh reported that they regularly bought fish from Kanatak villagers and

gave him some provisions so he could continue his voyage down the coast (AOM 1904:32).

The second new settlement, Wide Bay, lasted less than a decade. Like Kanatak, it had been established in 1890 by people from across the Alaska Peninsula (AOM 1898:508). In 1897, it was a viable community; Orthodox church records state that 29 men and 19 women in Wide Bay, all "Aleuts," took confession that year (ARCA:Reel 180). An Alaska Commerical Company document entitled "Wide Bay Station September 4, 1897" indicates a company interest there as well (Oswalt 1967:26). However, when Father Vasilii Martysh arrived on his yearly trip in the summer of 1902, the village was abandoned. He reported, "when otter hunting ceased, the inhabitants, abandoning their barabaras and the chapel, headed north" (AOM 1904:33).

The 1890 report also describes Chignik Bay, where the recently built fish cannery was located. At that time the cannery employed 60 white men and 120 Chinese laborers. There was little Native involvement in the salmon industry (Porter 1893:73).

Alutiiq Economic Activities in the 20th Century

Life on the Alaska Peninsula changed considerably at around the turn of the century. By then competition from other companies and even other Alaska Commercial Company

stores had changed the relationship of hunter to trader, allowing hunters, for the first time, to have a role in deciding to whom and at what price they would sell their furs. In 1889, Stafeev of the Douglas Alaska Commercial station complained of manager "F." of Katmai: "What is the use of being on Douglas? That fool F. creates rivalry with his own company!" (Stafeev ms.: October 28, 1889 [old style, October 16]). The fur hunters' autonomy was short-lived, however, for fur harvests had become abysmally low by the time the Alaska Commercial Company decided to close its two main posts, Douglas in 1901 and Katmai in 1902 (AOM 1902:432; AOM 1904:32).

By 1899, the priest was already reporting disastrous effects of the collapse of the fur business. Father Vasilli Martysh stated,

> This company . . . in many places removed their stores, and in other places, where stores still exist, stopped distributing to Natives not just goods, but even food on credit or on account against future animal catches. Moreover, for furs on hand, which Natives bring to the store for sale, they are paid, not in money but by company checks, which can be cashed only at the company agents' . . . . It's not an infrequent occurrence, where even for furs in hand such checks are not issued, but simply the catch added to a half-century-old debt (AOM 1899:91).

During the winter of 1897-1898, most of the villages in the region suffered starvation. The priest's report continues,

> Last summer, the inhabitants of Douglas went to sea on a hunt and brought in 11 otters, for which, taking them to the store, they didn't receive a cent and not a pound of provisions for the winter. They had not been able to put up fish or berries and other supplies, having been on the hunt the whole summer long. They supposed that the store wouldn't deny them provisions. Their hunt's value, 11 otters, by the most cheap but scrupulous reckoning, stretched to $8000.00. However, their hopes weren't borne out. In the fall, the manager of the store at Douglas received from the main office of the Alaska Commercial Company orders not to give anything from the store without money from the Aleuts. The manager, William Rode, an honest German, fulfilled the managerial orders to the letter. Starvation began. Each day the inhabitants of Douglas went out to the beach and waited for the tide to go down, so they could have the possibility of catching shellfish and feeding themselves. Sickness and death ripped into them. What would have happened to the poor Douglas people, if it hadn't been for Kodiak Creoles, who came by for the hunt . . . who, having with them a fairly good supply of provisions, risking their own hunger, shared with the dying Aleuts. . . . The store managers themselves, strictly fulfilling the order of the main office, seeing the people suffering hunger, were unable not to offer such help as they could (AOM 1899:91).

Father Vasilii submitted his last published travel reports for Douglas and Katmai in 1902 and 1904 respectively. His observations provide an interesting picture of life at the end of the fur trading era:

> [In 1901 t]he settlement of Douglas is composed of 10 barabaras, arranged on the flats, elevated above the sea shore. All the inhabitants number about 45 people. In former times, this settlement was famous for the sea otter catch, and the Alaskan [Commercial] Company up to the

> present year maintained a store here and only two weeks before my visit closed it (AOM 1902:432).
>
> This year [1902] no one has died [at Douglas] and even two sick syphilitics have recovered, probably because, owing to the absence of the store, there was no convenient way to drink too much. Concerning this, what effect on the Aleuts the closing of the store had, it's difficult to say anything definite. It seems that it brought more good consequences than bad ones. First, drunkenness is undoubtedly less, since obtaining flour and sugar for beer became so difficult. Secondly, the Aleuts returned to their original foods, which are the only ones appropriate to Alaska (AOM 1904:14).
>
> In both religious and moral attitude, the Katmai inhabitants stand much higher than the other Alaskan Aleuts. Drunkenness and lechery do not rage as strongly here as in other settlements. The Katmai people are also more hardworking, and therefore they live better than the other Aleuts. Almost every Katmai inhabitant has provisions the whole year round. In general, the Katmai Aleuts are far different from their neighbors, blessed with the good influence of the above-mentioned Aleksandr Ivanovich Petelin. Continuously for nine years, he, without compensation, held the position of psalm reader for the chapel and labored for the spiritual and corporeal benefit of the inhabitants. It's a real shame that this year he leaves Katmai, since the company is closing the store there. (AOM 1904:32).

By 1910 the population center on the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula had shifted from Katmai south and west. The cataclysmic eruption of Novarupta volcano near Katmai (popularly called the "Katmai eruption") propelled Alutiiqs away from their old villages and way of life, toward new homes and industries. Canneries and fish

processing plants replaced the fur trade as the basis of the peninsula's cash economy. The important economic centers on the Pacific side became Chignik, Sand Point, and Unga. Ugashik, Egegik, Pilot Point, and Port Moller on the Bering Sea side also drew seasonal Alutiiq workers to the commercial fishing industry. Other industries exerted weak but unmistakable pulls, oil at Kanatak and gold at Unga.

The advent of the commercial fishing industry caused a population influx far greater than had ever occurred during Russian days. For the first time Alutiiqs constituted a minority of the population on the Pacific side of the peninsula during the summer fishing season. For the first time the fact that Alaska was American rather than Russian was obvious and pertinent.

Canneries shipped Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino workers north for the summer, then shipped them back to Seattle and San Francisco in the fall. American gold miners and entrepreneurs set up camps in formerly abandoned villages or opened stores in inhabited ones. Scandinavian fishermen journeyed north from Seattle to fish for the canneries. A number of them married local Alutiiq women, settled in cannery towns, and founded the families which today make up most of the populations of Chignik Bay and

Chignik Lagoon.[41] In 1898, the *American Orthodox Messenger* described the influx of newcomers thus:

> From this time [1867] the dying out of Russians and the influx of all sorts of nationalities, chiefly Swedes and Finns, began.
>
> Displaced from their places of birth, cheated in the states, unemployed, hungry, thirsty, these knights of sad mien, found and up to now find a warm and hospitable corner in cold Alaska; having set aside all sorts of dreams about family life, they unexpectedly find a warm family hearth, by marrying local Creoles or Aleuts, -- and start with their progeny a new generation of Orthodox Creoles while they themselves remain heterodox: Lutheran, Episcopal, Catholic, and other erring Christians. However, they are for the most part indifferent in the matters of belief and therefore don't have their own temples (AOM 1898:266).

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[41]The history and nomenclature within the Chignik area can be confusing (see Figure 4). The villages of Chignik Bay and Chignik Lagoon are located on the shores of the large bay called Chignik Bay. Cannery activity began in 1888 at the former location, but the latter had become the major cannery by the 1930s and 1940s. There are two sides to the lagoon; the current village of Chignik Lagoon is located on the "flat side" while many people from Chignik Lake and Perryville have fish camps on the "cannery side." The "Old Village" at the elbow of the sand spit that separates the lagoon from the larger bay was abandoned following an epidemic during the early twentieth century. It was an Alutiiq village, while the village near the cannery was ethnically mixed and composed primarily of fishermen, their families, and cannery workers.

The present center of activity for the area is once again the town of Chignik Bay in Anchorage Bay, a small inlet within the larger Chignik Bay.

The village of Chignik Lake, up the short Chignik River from Chignik Lagoon, was established in the 1950s by families who had previously lived in Ilnik, Chignik Lagoon, and the Old Village.

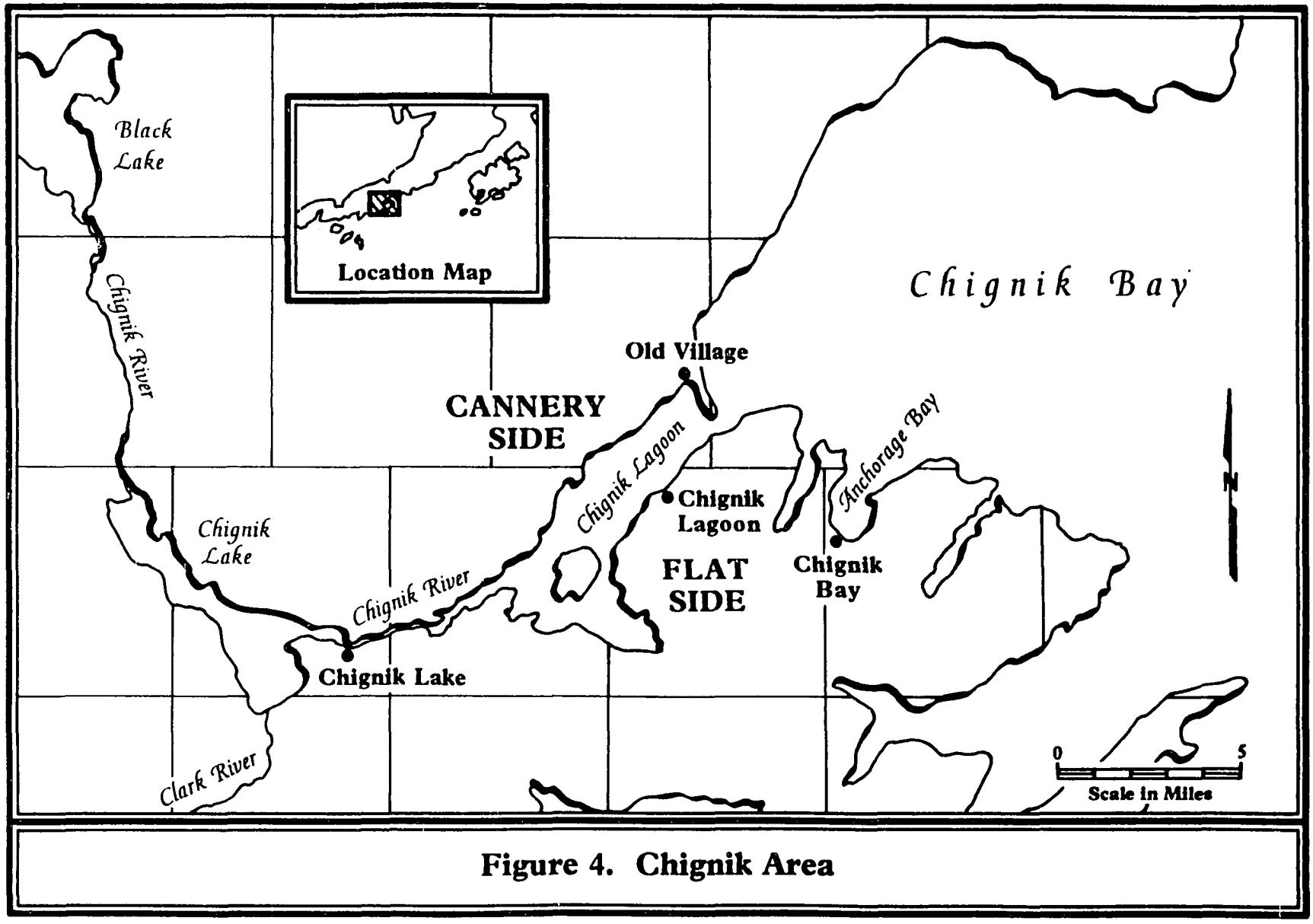

Figure 4. Chignik Area

As the 20th century progressed, an increasing number of Alutiiq men and women worked in the canneries or tended the huge fish traps planted in shallow lagoon waters. They obtained fish for their winter use by beach seining or simply helping themselves to the overflowing traps.

Although the Alutiiq population in the southwestern part of the Alaska Peninsula had increased by 1910, Alutiiq involvement in cannery work itself was still minor until the following decade (cf. Porter 1893:73 and below). The itinerate priest for the lower peninsula, Father A. Kedrovskii, described daily life as well as the involvement of Unangan and Alutiiq workers in several newly flourishing industries in the Belkofsky region near the western end of the Alaska Peninsula:

> The day of the local inhabitant, both in summer and winter, begins quite early: from 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. Toward 10 or 11 he eats lunch, then at 3:00 in the afternoon, when he drinks tea, he "rests," at 5:00 dines, and at 7:00, undresses for the night.
>
> Creoles, side by side with the Aleuts and Eskimos [Alutiiqs], also lead this very life with interest. It's true, in several settlements, where culture and civility started to take, [theirs] is the most affable and most intelligent and respectable existence, but usually the picture of the life of the Creoles is such as painted above. . . .
>
> This is the present occupation of the Natives: hunting for land and sea animals, fishing, hunting for wild game -- all this for household use (they sell only from 5 to 20 red fox hides per year to traders, for the sum of $5.00 for all), and partly daily work (seldom) in the

> trading companies, where they are kept safe, but the last few years [some] also work in fish canneries. (AOM 1911:273-4).
>
> Permanent [cannery employees] -- working the whole summer season, get wages with room and board of $35.00 per month and a percentage of 1/3 of a cent per each box of fish [packed], of which each factory delivers 65,000 and more. The last category of workers work for four or five months for $350 to $450. In infrequent instances, such a sum falls to Natives, especially to the Creoles, but mostly it falls in the pockets of the whites -- scum from Europe, imported from California by the fishery companies, or themselves settled earlier in other parts of Alaska. . . .
>
> Amongst all the Aleuts and Eskimos interest in this work is increasing. . . . The local inhabitants of Chignik and surrounding villages, (Eskimos) in numbers from 100 to 150 annually, from time to time, sometimes for a month or months at a time [work in the canneries]. . . .
>
> At mining works (gold at Unga and quarry mining at Chignik) one almost doesn't see Natives. However, for tens of white people there is now enough work to be paid from $2.50 to $3.00 . . . (AOM 1911:323-4).

As Alutiiqs became more involved in the commercial fishing industry in the 1910s, '20s, and '30s, their involvement in the fur industry also increased in the form of inland fur trapping and island fox farming (Nielson 1976; Tuten 1977:29-32). All able-bodied local Alutiiq and Scandinavian men, women and children became involved. People built up dogteams so they could check their winter traplines. They fed them from the huge surplus of salmon generated during the summer commercial fishing season.

Residents of Chignik altered their yearly cycles to accommodate this new industry, separating into nuclear families at isolated inland camps for much of the winter and making only occasional trips to the store and post office. The school at Chignik Bay was operated only during the summer, since virtually no children were present during the winter.

Perryvillers, held closer to the village by wintertime school and church, were less often at trapping camps but still spent substantial periods of time away from the village. They were able to manage the fox farm on nearby Chiachi Island directly from the village, making twice-weekly trips across the short channel with food for the foxes.

As during the previous century, villages were abandoned and sprang up as economic opportunities waned and waxed. The entire population of Kuyuyukak moved to Kanatak sometime in the 1910s or 1920s. Mitrofania was abandoned in the 1930s, its residents moving to either Perryville or Chignik Bay. A small Bering Sea Alutiiq village south of Port Heiden called Ilnik disappeared in the 1940s, as did Kanatak in the 1950s.

Creoles on the Alaska Peninsula in the American Period

During the American period the position of Creoles substantially changed in Alaska. The American social system could not accomodate fixed hereditary ranks, so the Creole class ceased to exist as a legal category in 1867. The group remained distinct in governmental records for some time, however, now pejoratively termed "half-breeds" or "mixed." The designation was racial without reference to lifestyle, language, or culture, and official records do not indicate the degree of social isolation or integration with peninsula Alutiiqs which the "half-breeds" experienced. One must refer to oral tradition for this information.

As mentioned above, the former Creoles came to be called "Russians," but the new Russian ethnicity -- to the extent that it was identifiable -- was highly situational. People appeared more or less Russian depending on the interethnic circumstance, seeming to don Europeanness when dealing with economic and church matters, then put on Alutiiqness for daily subsistence practices. If current attitudes are reflective of those at the turn of the 20th century, the Alutiiqs understood the situational nature of ethnic identity. They did not consider the "Russians" to be "non-Alutiiqs," but rather acknowledged that they took a slightly different cultural tack, that they emphasized

different aspects of their history. The situation thus illustrates McFee's contention that cultural heterogeneity is inherent when a "tribal" society undergoes rapid cultural change (cf. McFee 1968). Furthermore, the range and variation in what and who was accepted in local society suggests, as Barth (1969) and McFee (1968) noted, that complete cultural agreement is not a prerequisite to ethnic acceptance.

The use of the term "Russian" to define the former Creoles illustrates an interesting about-face in Alutiiq thinking. Whereas during the Russian period the Russians had been foreigners, by the American period they were considered almost insiders. In contrast to the American, Asian, and Scandinavian workers who had flooded into the region, these people were familiarly Russian Orthodox, spoke Alutiiq, were relatives, and had lived all their lives in the area from hunting, fishing, and gathering.

From 1880 until the 1930s the "Russian" population of the Alaska Peninsula was concentrated in the village of Mitrofania, although there were also local "Russians" -- e.g., Nikolai and Innokenty Kalmakoff, mentioned above. When Mitrofania was abandoned in the 1930s, its residents moved to either Chignik Bay, the "Old Village" on the spit at Chignik Lagoon, or Perryville. They married local Alutiiqs and their children were assimilated into the local

society.[42] Individual "Russians" who are remembered were trilingual in Russian, Alutiiq, and English. They were invariably involved in the church as readers and in oral tradition are credited with above-average intelligence. Like everyone else, they fished, hunted, and trapped. They may have been less rooted in the land than those who called themselves Alutiiqs, for many traveled extensively within the Alaska Peninsula/Shumagin Islands area, taking jobs where they were available. Those who retain a degree of ethnic distinctiveness from Alutiiqs today (the few self-identified "Russian Aleuts") maintained strong ties within their nuclear families, weaker ties to particular communities.

Post-War Life on the Alaska Peninsula

World War II brought abrupt changes: sailors were stationed at the port at Chignik Bay, and thousands of GIs poured into the new air base at Port Heiden. Young men from the peninsula served in the armed forces, while women continued to work in canneries on the peninsula and Kodiak.

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[42]As noted above, Russianness is a cultural rather than biological designation. I was told many stories about the "Russians" by their grown children or grandchildren, who consider themselves Alutiiqs. I heard only one living man called a Russian. He is a church reader in Perryville known for his punctuality in starting church. "There he goes to ring the bell," I was once told. "He's always rushin'!"

I was told that USO dances became a popular pasttime and that a number of interethnic romances and marriages occurred.

When the war ended, people tried to pick up where they had left off, but commercial fishing quickly changed with advances in technology and the 1959 outlawing of fishtraps. Fox farming and fur trapping all but disappeared (Tuten 1977:34), while transportation and communication with the rest of mainland Alaska improved. Two major post-war changes, the effects of which are only now becoming apparent, were a change in language dominance from Alutiiq to English and the arrival of Protestant missionaries to Alaska Peninsula villages.

Alutiiq Ethnicity in the American Period

The first 30 years of the American period were relatively stable for the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs. Life continued much as it had under the Russians.

At the turn of the century the widespread movement of much of the Alutiiq population of the Alaska Peninsula, coupled with a massive influx of outsiders, radically changed peninsula demographics. These changes solidified a sense which had been dimly awakened during Russian days of a particularly *Alutiiq* identity. At the same time the

changes forced accommodations in what constituted that identity.

In local folklore the newcomers are assigned to three separate social categories: bosses, transients, and permanent residents. The bosses -- who included nonresident cannery owners and managers, fur buyers, doctors, some priests (depending on ethnicity and personality), teachers, and store owners -- proliferated to an extent unknown in the previous century. Most were Caucasian English-speaking Protestants who, unlike their Russian predecessors, neither sought nor achieved integration with the local people. A separate lore grew up around them, playing on the ironic combination of economic power and cultural ignorance inherent in their positions. This lore accentuated far more strongly than had been previously necessary the distinction between local Alutiiqs and newcomers.

The second group, Asian transients, were considered curiosities. They affected Alutiiq life little, living apart in temporary, self-contained and insulated enclaves.

The Scandinavian fishermen were a different matter. Like the 19th century Koniags and Creoles who had moved to Katmai, for a time they became incorporated into the Alutiiq social system. They had become affinal kin by marrying local women; they either converted to Russian Orthodoxy or allowed their wives and children to practice

it; they hunted, fished, and trapped like their Alutiiq neighbors; and they adopted Alutiiq customs such as the *banyu*. At first only the Alutiiq language suffered by their presence. Some of their children learned to speak it from their mothers, but more grew up monolingual speakers of English, the *lingua franca* in the canneries.

Now in the late 20th century these "Scandinavian-Aleuts" (as they are called) no longer consider themselves primarily Alutiiq. They have forged a different way of life based primarily on commercial fishing, in contrast to their Alutiiq neighbors who depend to a much larger extent on subsistence hunting and gathering.[43] Their cultural and social separation from their Alutiiq cousins was first occasioned by the requirements of fur trapping and fox farming. During the heyday of the fur industry nuclear families had to act as tight-knit, independent, and geographically separated economic units. The families themselves were extremely large, 10 children being common. Because of their size and age ranges, these families needed little help from others. In their isolation they stopped

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[43]James Fall of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence reports that for two out of the three years the division made a harvest survey, residents of Chignik Lagoon and Chignik Bay harvested substantial amounts of subsistence foods (more than 200 pounds per capita per year) which were nonetheless much lower than the harvests of Chignik Lake, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay, where harvests averaged 400 to 450 pounds per capita (Fall pers. comm. 1993; cf. also Fall et. al. 1993).

using the Alutiiq language entirely. They could not attend the Russian Orthodox church from their winter camps, and since their fathers were generally unenthusiastic about the religion, the habit was completely dropped in the summer as well. The Scandinavian-Aleut families, more than their Alutiiq relatives, looked toward the English-speaking United States for technology, education, and culture. Their children tended to find marriage partners from among the other Scandinavian-Aleut families.[44]

Perryville and Chignik Lake elders who grew up with many of these families express conflicting judgments regarding the ethnicity of the latter. Often within the same conversation I've been told, first, that "They're Aleuts just like us!" and later, in disappointment, "They don't care about the language or the church over there any more!"[45] These statements indicate the Alutiiq propensity, which I discuss elsewhere, toward incorporation rather than exclusion of others whenever possible. Rather than deny a relationship which was strong in the past but is weaker now, Alutiiq elders seem to hold out hope for a cultural

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[44]Like the designation "Russian," "Scandinavian Aleut" is a cultural and social rather than biological label. One very prominent family in Chignik Lake traces its ancestry to a Swedish fisherman, but, perhaps because his son (the father of today's elders) died before the children came of age, the family is oriented toward Alutiiq culture and lifestyle.

[45]Paraphrased from fieldnotes.

reconciliation, considering the "Scandinavian-Aleuts" to be "lapsed Alutiiqs."

During the 20th century, Alutiiqs also came into close contact with both Unangan (*Taya'uqs*) and Yup'iks (whom they call "Eskimos") in the cannery towns of Unga, Port Moller, Ugashik, Egegik, and Pilot Point. Today Alutiiqs express little animosity toward either group, but they are adamant in differentiating themselves from both. In local perception, an absolute ethnic border has replaced what used to be a permeable, flexible frontier.

World War II marked another major watershed in ethnic phenomena on the Alaska Peninsula. Until the war traditional Alutiiq alliance strategies for dealing with outsiders (i.e., the development of fictive kinship relationships) continued to be effective. The major pre-war adaptations to change were confined to dealing with technological innovations. This altered after the war for several reasons.

American teachers had always punished students who spoke the Alutiiq language in school, but after the war the use of Alutiiq at home declined markedly as well. Post-war baby boomers were the second generation of Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq school children, and the first not to be taught Alutiiq at home. Because their parents had been humiliated at school for speaking Alutiiq, they determined not to speak the language to their children, thereby saving them

from similar experiences. By the 1950s few young village children could speak Alutiiq.

It was also during the 1950s that the assumption that all Alutiiqs were Russian Orthodox was tested with the arrival of the first evangelistic Slavic Gospel Church missionaries in Perryville. The missionaries were, by all accounts, friendly, generous, and well-liked as individuals. But when they succeeded in converting a number of people away from Orthodoxy, the community erupted. The intensity of the animosity that arose between Orthodox faithful and new evangelical converts was the result of an assault on the basic symbolic system (which was intimately tied with Russian Orthodoxy) on which individual and cultural identity rested. The schism was brought to a head in 1965 when six families left the village and moved to Ivanof Bay.[46]

The two major assaults on the Alutiiq identity configuration, English and Protestantism, have been joined by a third in recent years: the popularity of Western-style foods and a distaste for some "Native" foods among many young people. This triple threat is causing some older Alutiiqs to question long-held ideas about their ethnic identity. It is not at all clear to them how one can be a

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[46]Cf. Ellanna and Balluta (1992:302) concerning the impact of Protestant missionaries in an Orthodox Dena'ina village.

Protestant, English-speaking Alutiiq whose favorite food is a Big Mac.

Whereas there have been a number of social factors pushing Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs together toward a unified ethnic identity during the 20th century, there are few pulling them toward unity with Alutiiqs from other areas. The Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq villages are not part of any larger pan-Alutiiq system. Their election district consists of the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutian Islands, and Bristol Bay, but not Kodiak Island, the Kenai Peninsula, or Prince William Sound, the historic homelands of other Alutiiqs. Though historically close to Kodiak in culture and language, they are not in the Kodiak regional corporation established under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; nor are they members of corporations of the Kenai Peninsula or the Prince William Sound Alutiiqs. Rather, they are part of the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, which is comprised primarily of Yup'iks. Similarly, the Alaska Peninsula village schools are part of a regional school district which also includes Yup'ik and Dena'ina villages but not other Alutiiqs.

Against this backdrop of influences both toward and away from a common Alutiiq identity configuration, I now turn to the lore itself and what it shows about ethnic processes on the Alaska Peninsula.

CHAPTER IV

THE GENESIS OF MODERN ALUTIIQ ETHNICITY

Introduction

On June 6, 1912, in what is locally called "the Katmai eruption," Novarupta Volcano in southwestern Alaska exploded in one of the largest volcanic eruptions in the history of the world. Ash and pumice buried the villages of Savonoski and Upper Savonoski, Katmai and Douglas, and the seasonally-operated fish processing camp at Kaflia Bay. Ash fell two feet deep on Kodiak 115 miles away. The explosion spawned continuous thunder and lightning storms and resulted in total darkness for more than 48 hours. Its roar was heard as far away as Juneau, 750 miles distant (Martin 1913:131). This event was the cause of widespread displacement of the Alutiiq population of the Alaska Peninsula. Katmai and Douglas villagers were rescued by U.S. Revenue Cutter Service (USRCS) ships and transported to a location far to the southwest, where they established the new village of Perryville.

The eruption became a nation-wide media event which resulted in the formation of Katmai National Monument. Many people, Native and non-Native, locals and visitors, recorded their experiences during those few days in the

summer of 1912. Their accounts give a valuable picture of life on the Alaska Peninsula at the time. They also illustrate the process by which oral history becomes oral tradition[47] and exemplify the manipulation of symbols and history in ethnic self-definition.

In this chapter I explore the symbols attached to the Katmai story as contemporary Perryvillers tell it and consider how their narratives cast the disaster in a mythic light. I also suggest that modern definitions of both folklore and history derive from the eruption.

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[47]Here I use the terms "oral history" and "oral tradition" according to Vansina's distinction:

> The sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants. This differs from oral traditions in that oral traditions are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants (1985:12-13).

Other oral historians understand the terms in slightly different ways; eg., Allen and Montell (1981:23) do not differentiate contemporary from long-past accounts; they maintain that both are part of oral history. They state,

> We prefer to think of oral history, therefore, not only as a method of acquiring information but as a body of knowledge about the past that is uniquely different from the information contained in written records (Allen and Montell 1981:23).

I find Vansina's distinction valuable in the Katmai case, since in fact the stories have changed in a number of ways during second and third generation tellings.

Primary Sources

When I first visited Perryville in September 1990, I explained that I was interested in hearing "old stories and history." My hosts responded with brief descriptions of the Katmai disaster and Perryville's founding. They gave me copies of written accounts of the eruption by eyewitnesses Father Harry Kaiakokonok (a Russian Orthodox priest) and George Kosbruk. Father Harry had been a five-year-old and Kosbruk a young man of eighteen at the time of the eruption. Both had lived all of their adult lives in Perryville.

Although I never met either man, I was able to hear and read their accounts of the Katmai eruption. Father Harry had recorded two interviews in 1975 with U.S. National Park Service rangers (Kaiakokonok 1975a, 1975b). These interviews show a mixture of first-hand memory and second-hand report. Father Harry's own memories bring to the narrative a child's perspective of playfulness and fearlessness (cf. Garraghan 1940:234), but as a child he was unaware of who made decisions or the precise chronology of events. He filled in these details many years later when he learned them from his elders. Father Harry seems always to have been careful in differentiating his first-hand knowledge from what he was told. An obligatory post-base in his native Alutiiq language, *-uma*, indicates when

the speaker did not personally see the events he is about to describe but believes them to be true. Although Father Harry's testimonies were in English, he used the translation of this post-base, "must have been," indicating the same careful attitude toward first-hand evidence in his second language.

Father Harry also wrote an account of the eruption in 1956 for the Sitka Public Health Service's publication, *Island Breezes* (Kaiakokonok 1956). A photocopy of this typed article was given to me by his foster daughter in September 1990. It is apparently the basis of much of the information contained in a book written by a teacher who lived in Perryville for five years during the 1960s (Johnson and Johnson 1977).

Finally, an account represented as a verbatim rendering by Father Harry to former Perryville resident Tom Jessee is included in a letter Jessee (1961) wrote in 1961, although how the author obtained or recorded the story is not indicated.

George Kosbruk was also interviewed and recorded twice by U.S. National Park Service employees (Kosbruk 1975a, 1975b). His testimony is valuable because it provides the perspective of an 18-year-old man who was fully aware of the danger the eruption posed. The account is limited by Kosbruk's difficulty with English. A more reliable source is a translation by Jeff Leer of a recorded performance at

an elders' conference in Dillingham in the late 1970s (Kosbruk n.d.). Kosbruk's fourth account (1976) took the form of a printed interview in the 1976 edition of Kodiak High School's student publication *Elwani*. This version resulted from several editorial steps: Kosbruk either recorded or told the Katmai story in Alutiiq to Effie Shangin of Perryville. She then translated and wrote the story in English, and sent it to her son who was attending school in Kodiak. The editors in Kodiak may have altered Shangin's version before it appeared in print. A short fifth account attributed to Kosbruk is included (with an account by Father Harry) in Jessee's (1961) letter, mentioned above.

Father Harry Kaiakokonok's first published testimony (1956) was written 44 years after the eruption, and his and Kosbruk's interviews (1975a, 1975b) were recorded more than a half century afterward. This time lag between occurrence and telling suggests that the accounts have become more than eyewitness testimonies; through the years they were invested also with symbolic and integrative importance for the community of Perryville. Furthermore, the two elders framed their performances with particular emphases and messages for specific audiences at specific times; these dimensions are discussed in detail below.

Father Harry and George Kosbruk had recounted the story many times through the years to younger Perryvillers.

Jessee explained, "He [Kosbruk] usually supplied skeletal details which Harry fleshened and brought to life" (1961). Aside from differences attributable to individual experience, their accounts are quite similar. Each man reported a few things that the other did not. For instance, Father Harry recalled playing in the ash as if it were soft, gray, warm snow (Kaiakokonok 1975a), while Kosbruk spoke of having difficulty keeping water in a teapot during the continuous earthquakes (Kosbruk 1975a).

After attempting to convince Perryville adults to record the Katmai story for me with only limited success, I concluded that Father Harry's and Kosbruk's accounts have been elevated to near-canon status in Perryville. All adults claimed to be familiar with the story, but none agreed to record it in its entirety, invariably referring instead to the published and recorded versions by the two elders. In Chignik Lake, on the other hand, I was invited to listen to an account by a third eyewitness which disagrees in small but interesting details with Father Harry's and Kosbruk's. Barbara Shangin Sanook, known in Chignik Lake as "the Old Gramma" (in contrast with Dora Andre, who was called "Young Gramma") was 16 or 17 years old when the volcano erupted. She spent the next 40 years in Perryville but moved to Chignik Lake in the 1950s to care for her grandchildren when her daughter died. In 1968, she recorded the Katmai story in Alutiiq for the

teachers at the Chignik Lake school (Sanook 1968). She died in the 1970s, and it wasn't until late 1992 that villagers received a copy of the recording from the teachers, by then long gone from Alaska.

Sanook's story is unique in that it does not romanticize life in Katmai before the eruption as do the reports of the two men -- particularly Father Harry -- and all the fragments told me by living informants. For instance, she remembered wearing floor-length cloth dresses, not skin clothing. She recalled that some people had built plank house of salvaged boards from a shipwreck (they lived in "real houses," not barabaras, she said) and that they all had "real stoves" (i.e., not fireplaces or stone oil lamps). The village was located far inland from the sea so the people couldn't easily hunt whales, nor were there caribou in the area (i.e., it was not a place of unlimited bounty as accepted accounts state). Furthermore, the people did not need to depend entirely on hunting and fishing, for in "Katmai, store, big store! Nothing need! Everything!" She doesn't remember the first time white men appeared at Katmai, for they were always coming in big sailing ships which brought supplies.

Sanook's remembrances of the eruption were never published or transcribed, and she and her grandchildren moved away from Perryville 40 years ago. I believe that because of this, Perryvillers have forgotten details of the

eruption which she recalled. One effect of the loss of her recollections is an apparent unanimity in the interpretation of the experience which did not exist when the survivors were alive. Since Father Harry and George Kosbruk told the story most often and in most detail, it is their interpretations which live on.

This situation serves as a reminder that memory is selective and that a given account of a past occurrence depends on the identities of both narrator and audience. For instance, although Sanook's interviewers were white school teachers, the audience to which she specifically addressed her comments consisted of the Alutiiq members of the party, Dora Andre and Bill and Doris Lind. Her recollections give the impression that she was searching her memory for images rather than for artful ways to explain the circumstances to outsiders. The following excerpts from my interview with Doris Lind and Sanook's granddaughter Virginia Aleck, during which they translated Old Gramma's tape, illustrate the extent to which she believed she was recounting the story for the Alutiiqs present:

VA: She said she's gonna talk Aleut.
[original tape in Alutiiq is played]
PP: She was 16 when
VA: Yeah
DL: She was 16
PP: When? When the eruption occurred?
VA: Yeah.
[tape]

VA: Gramma's [Dora Andre] telling her she gotta hold the mike.
. . .
[tape]
VA: She's telling Uncle [Bill Lind] that they were from Katmai and the other one was another guy's, they were at *Kauglla* [Kaflia Bay].
. . .
[tape]
VA: Uncle's asking her how long they stayed in Kodiak. Two months. There in Afognak.

In contrast, the recorded versions by both Father Harry (Kaiakokonok 1975a, 1975b) and George Kosbruk (1975a, 1975b) were made specifically in response to requests by Caucasian researchers of relatively high status, to whom it can be assumed that the orators felt it was important that a particular image of Perryville and its people be communicated. Specifically, the bounties of Katmai and, more importantly, the skill of Alutiiq forefathers in subsisting off them were crucial pieces of information (see excerpts below). Furthermore, the interviewers framed their questions to elicit the story of Perryville's origin. Their interviewees, particularly Father Harry, obligingly responded with well-rounded stories which could be conveyed in turn to other outsiders.

Younger Alutiiqs who had not lived through the experience themselves also told me parts of the Katmai story. These contemporary accounts focus on the search for a new home after the people had been rescued. They reinforce the connection of today's Perryvillers to both

their history and to the village's current location and coincidentally validate claims to the land around Perryville.

I was also told a unique story by a woman who called herself a "Russian Aleut" (her parents were Creoles). She had grown up in Chignik Bay but now lives in Kodiak. She maintained that soon after establishing their new village the Perryvillers had gone to the top of a hill and tossed the entire supply of flour given them by the USRCS into the air, watching it fall like snow. A common motif in contact-era stories involves Natives treating European food in ignorant and inappropriate ways (cf. deLaguna 1972:259, Jones, pers. comm. 1985, and Goodwin 1986:168). The Katmai version of the motif serves to establish ethnic distance between the teller, a Russian Aleut, and the subjects of the stories, Alutiiq Natives. It also declares the founding of Perryville to be the first real contact between the people of Katmai and Westerners, emphasizing discontinuity in local attitudes between pre- and post-Katmai life, a theme which is also borne out in the eyewitness accounts of Kosbruk and Kaiakokonok (see below).

Written sources, both official and unofficial, also describe the disaster. The most immediate are the wireless messages and Annual Reports of the USRCS, whose personnel were instrumental in the rescue and relocation of the peninsula Natives after the eruption (none of whom died as

a direct result of the eruption). Other witnesses, further removed, provide varying perspectives. Former inhabitants of the village of Old Savonoski, also destroyed in the eruption (Vick 1983:233, 235ff.), residents of Kodiak whose homes were also buried in ash (Erskine 1962; Chichenoff 1975; Ellenak 1976), residents of Afognak where the refugees were taken after their rescue from the Alaska Peninsula (Harvey 1991), and geologists and journalists have left recorded and written accounts (Martin 1913; Griggs 1917).

The Story

What follows is the Katmai story as Perryville elders Father Harry Kaiakokonok and George Kosbruk told it. I feel justified in referring to their eight versions and fragments (Kaiakokonok 1956, 1975a, 1975b; Jessee 1961; Kosbruk 1975a, 1975b, 1976, n.d.) together as a single -- "the" -- story for several reasons. First, as noted above, the narratives are alike in the sequence and weighting of events. Jessee's comment that "He [Kosbruk] usually supplied skeletal details which Harry fleshened and brought to life" (1961) is pertinent, for it indicates that the two men were in substantial agreement about the narrative.

Second, Perryvillers today speak of "the" Katmai story. They made it clear to me that "the story" comprises

all events and details that have ever been told about the Katmai eruption and the move to Perryville, whether or not particular details make it into a given narrative. The inevitable variations in oral performance thus should not be viewed as different *versions*, but as different *parts* of the story. I concluded that most of the nonwitnesses' reluctance to relate the story rests on the belief that although everyone remembers its outline, only Father Harry and George Kosbruk knew it all.

I thus present the story as a unified whole, despite the fact that I have extracted quotations from among the eight sources as they fit into the narrative. This being said, I also recognize that there *is* variation in the way different storytellers recount the Katmai story. This aspect of the performer's art is considered in detail following the plot outline.

Prologue

The inhabitants of the former Alaska Commercial Company posts of Katmai and Douglas were most directly affected by the eruption. In the summer of 1912 they had packed up their summer supplies and moved to Kaflia Bay as usual to work at the fish saltery:

> two small villages [Katmai and Douglas] combined together to work for Mr. Foster of Kodiak

> salting red salmon bellies and smoking the back part of the salmon for commercial use (Kaiakokonok 1956:n.p.).

In addition to the summer population of saltery workers, three families from Katmai had lived at Kaflia year-round since about 1910. They had built log cabins rather than barabaras. There were no saltery buildings in Kaflia Bay (fish were loaded directly from the shore to the ship via dories), but there was a small store and the three log cabins. The tents of the Douglas people were pitched on the north side of the bay and those of the Katmai people on the south side (Kaiakokonok 1975a).[48]

Two Katmai families had gone not to Kaflia but instead to Puale (called "Cold") Bay where they were camping when the eruption occurred (Martin 1913:147; Kosbruk 1975a).

According to the stories, Katmai was a near-paradise. It was extremely rich in fish and game (as noted above, only Old Grandma disputed this claim in a minor way), offering everything the people needed. Father Harry described it thus:

> And this creek was so clean, crystal clear water -- oh, summertime, and thousands and thousands salmon go into that river. Every kind of a species of salmon; dogs, humpies, silvers, reds,

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[48]Oddly, when Wendell Oswalt conducted an archaeological survey of Kaflia Bay in 1955, he did not report remains of any permanent structures other than four barabaras (Oswalt 1955:36).

> mix up. Then springtime they say. . . our rivers used to be plugged with those [candlefish]. . . . Springtime, front of that village, the flat used to be all black with geese, many kind of ducks, swans. . . . There was moose all the time, and caribou (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

Premonition and Preparation

The stories then tell of a premonition of disaster which the Savonoski people had had. Because of this, they already had moved to Naknek when the mountain blew up. Father Harry noted,

> several times, maybe more than several times, we used to notice the jerks. Not exactly a earthquake; big jerk and a big rumble from that volcano. And *that's why this Savonoski people from way up there inland . . . they know that eruption was coming* (emphasis added; Kaiakokonok 1975a).

Actually, Savonoski's residents moved to Naknek each summer for the fishing season. The summer of 1912 was probably no different from the previous years (Hussey 1971:329).

But according to the stories, the people of Savonoski were not the only ones to sense coming disaster: land mammals had been especially scarce that spring and summer. They also evacuated the area because of the impending disaster: "The animals must have known that something was

the problem, and they go some other places where they can survive" (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

The narratives next describe the wisdom of one old man, named Apacaq, who had been through previous eruptions and knew that the boats must be turned upside down and water gathered before all the streams were choked with ash. A similar motif is reported from Kodiak. Katherine Chichenoff recalled in 1975,

> I walked down to Kraft's [the general store] and that big lake there, and as I was going into Kraft's, a man came out and said, "There's going to be eruption. Some mountain is going to erupt," he said. He said he just read about Mount Vesuvius and he said, "I'm going to tell people to cover their wells" (1975).

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, these precautions were insufficient to see the people through the disaster. Captain Perry, who had been in Kodiak at the time of the eruption, reported that all streams and wells were choked by 9 a.m. on the 7th of June, the day after the eruption (USRCS AR 1912;115). Similarly, in an oft-quoted letter reportedly written from Kaflia Bay on June 9, visitor Ivan Orloff wrote to his wife in Afognak, "In a word, it is terrible, and we are expecting death at any moment, and we have no water" (first reported in Martin 1913:148; how Martin got this letter we are not told). Father Harry

recalled that there actually had been water at the end of their ordeal:

> And the storekeeper, across the little bay, fortunately carried -- had a pipe stuck into that small running water on a hillside which just come out of the ground. . . . When the first ashes hit, he drain down through that pipe and clean up. And then as soon as the daybreak [when light began to return to Kaflia], the people know that pipe and they carry water from there and survive (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

The Eruption

The people at Kaflia Bay first knew of the eruption when they heard a tremendous noise and saw a cloud coming out of the mountain. Everyone shouted, "*Puyulek*! *Puyulek*! [Volcano!]"

George Kosbruk first saw and heard the eruption from the bay where he was fishing with his brother. He recalled,

> Me and my brother was out in boat when mountain exploded. We don't like that much. My brother, he look like he got worry on his face. He say, "We better go back to land." We start to leave, and then lightnings getting closer. Big rocks, red with hot, fall in bay all around boat. They fall right close to boat and go blub -- blubble -- blubble. We scared like hell, I tell you! We don't fool around much with that place (Jessee 1961).

The shape of the volcanic cloud has undergone a meaningful change in the retelling through the years, illustrating the effect of context -- in this case an understanding that the world has entered the nuclear age -- on narrative. Geologist George C. Martin, who had journeyed to the scene with a National Geographic Society party several months after the eruption, was told that the cloud was

> a beautiful illuminated funnel-shaped cloud, which rose straight into the air. . . . It afterward assumed different colors and dissolved into cloudbanks, being illuminated all the time. A similar cloud was observed from Iliamna, . . . the description different . . . only in the statement that in losing its funnel-shape form it assumed the "shape of a ship" (Martin 1913:161).

In his written version, Father Harry (1956) described the cloud thus:

> The mountain just come up something compare to a fountain, it's quite difficult to make a definite description concerning this erupting mountain. She must rose up something like a bread dough and flow over on all sides with what they might call pumice stone (Kaiakokonok 1956:n.p.).

By his 1975 interview, the image had changed. Father Harry said,

> It comes up like a mushroom. Like that, that -- you see that atomic bomb when it exploded? It

> looks something like that. It comes up and flowing, flowing, flowing; red, black, just like rolling all around! And the man who was staying right by it, he made a picture of it, drawing with a pencil. And then he made it just like a atomic bomb explosion (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

George Kosbruk, in his *Elwani* article, said, "Roaring thunder followed, then a mushroom-like cloud shot up real high. No difference from a bomb picture we see in magazines today" (1976:17).

The image of the mushroom-shaped cloud, which would not have been meaningful before 1945, compares not just the shape of the cloud to the cloud generated by an atomic bomb but also the magnitude of the explosion to the atomic disasters of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The mushroom-shaped cloud, through its joint associations (by storyteller and audience alike) with both World War II and the Katmai eruption, symbolizes the complete destruction of Katmai, Douglas, and the old way of life.

Judgment Day

Kosbruk's and Father Harry's testimonies then recall the long, dark, hot, noisy, smelly ordeal when pumice and ash poured down on the community for 48 hours (Father

Harry) or five days (Kosbruk).[49] All the people gathered in the log cabins that had recently been built (Kaiakokonok 1975a). Father Harry notes that he, as a child, was not afraid but that the adults were. Kosbruk stated,

> People believed in the Bible, and how it would be when the world came to an end. So we all thought this was it. We had no hope of surviving; we gathered this from older people. Prayer was our only hope. We gathered together and made a special prayer to the Virgin Mary (Kosbruk 1976:18).

This sense that the world was coming to an end was widespread throughout the region. An acquaintance from Afognak told me that her grandmother was sure that Judgment Day had arrived. In 1990, a Perryviller compared the disaster to the last days of Pompeii (cf. Chichenoff 1975).[50]

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[49]The number five was traditionally significant in Alutiiq culture, for Pinart (1873a) reported that the Koniags divided the firmament into five regions and that every man dies and is reborn five times (1873a:677). I have heard no evidence that five is still a meaningful number.

[50]This comparison first appeared in print in an article in the *National Geographic* in 1917 (Griggs 1917). Perryvillers are familiar with this issue, so it is possible that the image of Pompeii came from that source.

Messengers

The prayers were answered by a slight glimmer of light through immense clouds of ash. The people decided to supplement prayer with human action. They sent three young men in *baidarkas* to the village of Afognak across Shelikof Strait. Johnson reports that two of the messengers were Wasco Sanook of Katmai and Vanka Orloff, a visitor from Afognak and the son of Ivan Orloff who had written the letter to his wife, quoted above (Johnson and Johnson 1977:171).[51] The third remains unidentified, and in fact none of the three is named in accounts by Perryvillers. The kayakers' anonymity may be due in part to the fact that they were all young men, not yet suitable role models for other Alutiiqs. Their anonymity also serves a dramatic purpose in the Katmai story: it lends a mythic element to the story in emphasizing the *role* of messenger rather than the individual *identities*. Finally, this anonymity gives the impression that the story is very old, having occurred so long ago that names are no longer remembered.

[51]Although "Wasco" and "Vanka" are nicknames for Wasillie or Vasilii and Ivan respectively, neither man is ever referred to by the formal name.

Rescue

The kayakers' mission was successful. The USRCS was alerted and a ship steamed to Kaflia Bay to rescue the refugees.

Meanwhile, Father Aleksandr Petelin was at Kanatak on his yearly visit to his peninsula churches. His obituary notice incorrectly states that he had been at Katmai, merging the story of his personal involvement in the rescue of Kanatak residents with the broader story of the Katmai and Douglas inhabitants:

> The eruption of the volcano in 1912 caught him on a trip, when he was visiting the settlement of Katmai in May. When the eruption occurred, it became dark in the middle of the day and the settlement became covered with volcanic ashes, while a subterranean rumble was heard. The inhabitants of Katmai village began to panic. Then the fearless missionary, forgetting himself, not losing his presence of mind, set about to rescue his flock: he directed all the inhabitants of the village to board the sloops and baidarkas and go out to sea. He himself sat in the last baidarka and left last. Thanks only to this selfless good pastor, no misfortune came to the people during the catastrophe. After the inhabitants left the settlement, this village was destroyed and covered with ashes. The inhabitants were resettled to another site and at the present time the village of Katmai no longer exists. This unselfish feat of Father Petelin during the escape of his flock during the eruption of the volcano is now often recalled both by the Natives, and by the Americans (AOM 1916:573).

The cutters necessarily reported the disaster from a different perspective. The *Manning*, under the command of Captain K. W. Perry, had just gotten into Kodiak when the ashfall began. Perry and his crew by all accounts performed heroically in housing and feeding the inhabitants of Kodiak on board the ship and in seeing to residents of the outlying villages (cf.Erskine 1962). At 8:15 p.m. on June 11, the steamer *Redondo*, impressed into service for the Katmai emergency under the command of Lt. Thompson, arrived at Afognak. By then the Kaflia kayakers had made it to the island and told of their plight, though they are not mentioned in the cutter reports. Thompson wrote,

> Received report from Charles Pajoman [a store and sloop owner from Afognak] that great distress prevailed on mainland near Kaflia Bay, and at 8:35 p.m. up anchor and headed for that position" (USRCS AR 1912:125).

In the absence of long-distance communication technology, Pajoman could only have learned of the distress from the kayakers.

On Wednesday, June 12, 1912, at 2:30 a.m., Thompson arrived at Kaflia Bay. He reported,

> . . . [I] found natives destitute, but apparently in normal health, and very badly frightened. Volcanic ashes had buried the village to a depth of three feet on the level, closing all streams and shutting off the local water supply. . . . The village was comprised of natives from Cape Douglas to Katmai, seismic

> disturbance having caused them to abandon their usual camps and seek mutual protection at Kaflia Bay (USRCS AR 1912:125).

Refugees

On June 12th, 114 people were taken from Kaflia Bay to Afognak, where they were housed in the vacant schoolhouse, in vacant houses, and with residents. They stayed there until the beginning of July.

At the time of the eruption, Eunice Neseth, daughter of an Afognak Creole woman and Swedish father, was five years old. Her family's story is recounted in Lola Harvey's *Derevnia's Daughters* (1991). The reported reactions of the Afognak residents to the refugees from the mainland are instructive:

> The strangers that were living in the schoolhouse and in the yard around Orloff's place were unlike other people they had known. Papa said they were from way across Shelikof Strait, from a place called Katmai. . . . Eunice and Enola, though curious, were afraid of them. . . .
>
> These men and women were dark-skinned with dark slit-eyes and black hair, straight and close-cropped. The women wore calico dresses and kerchiefs, which lessened somewhat their scary appearance to the girls. The men, however, wore dark hats, and coarse dark-colored suits with heavy knee-high *turbusii*, the skin boots typically worn by mainland natives. Both girls had seen some children as they ran past the schoolyard, but they were not going to stop and ask them to play. . . .

> When rescue came, [Ivan] Orloff and his wife, Tania, let some of the people stay in their barn and *banya*. Others were sheltered at the schoolhouse. The revenue cutter left an officer in Afognak to oversee the distribution of rations of food and gear to the refugees. . . .
>
> Herman [Eunice's father] told his family that he had made arrangements for the Katmai men to carve a number of the crochet hooks [of ivory] and some miniature skin *bidarkas*, with carved men, to sell in the store. He thought the work would be a good occupation for the men, and, of course, he hoped to sell all the items they could produce (Harvey 1991:110-1).

This selection indicates the social and cultural gulf between Afognak Creoles and Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, despite their common religion and language and their participation in the same economic system. The passage is also instructive in contrast to the very brief mention Alutiiq storytellers make of their time in Afognak. That month or so is passed over as an inconsequential interruption of the pilgrimage to Perryville. It was a liminal time when the refugees temporarily placed their lives on hold.

Meanwhile, it had soon become apparent to both cutter personnel and the Alutiiqs of the Katmai coast that their old homes were no longer habitable. The cutters made two trips to Douglas and Katmai so the residents could retrieve as many belongings as possible. Government officials began seeking a new village site for the refugees.

Relocation

According to USRCS documents, Captain Reynolds, commander of the Bering Sea Fleet and of the *Tahoma*, made the decision to move the people down the coast beyond Chignik. In a dispatch sent from the *Tahoma* on June 24, 1912, he wrote,

> Recommend the ninety-eight mainland natives now destitute and depending on Government aid be located immediately peninsula westward of Chignik, probably Stepovak [a bay southwest of Ivanof Bay]. Good summer fishing. Winter trapping and hunting. Should be moved by July 10th to insure winter supply fish. . . . soon self supporting. . . . Probable cost [of building material] one thousand dollars. . . . Agent acquainted with natives possibly Bureau Education should be sent to compel fishing, building, etc., and handle rations. . . (USRCS Archives 671, Roll 16).

The 1913 Annual Report of the USRCS talks of "the *Tahoma* [with five Katmai/Douglas Natives and Fr. Petelin as interpreter] having left several days previously to select the site" (USRCS 1913:93). Captain Perry of the cutter *Manning* followed with the bulk of the refugees. Local villagers were apparently to choose the specific site for the new village within the area west of Chignik. Oral tradition agrees with this view, although not all residents were aware of the mechanisms through which the choice was to be made. Kosbruk stated, "We spent about two weeks

there [Afognak] till the Coast Guard boarded us to proceed on our journey west. Where? Japan? We never knew where they were bringing us" (1976:18). Father Harry, on the other hand, recalled,

> I don't know where they -- where we were going, but the people had the Coast Guards give the people quite a long notice for them to make decisions which way they wanted to go. Southwestward or eastward from Kodiak. The people don't know which way to go, which way would be better for them for living; and a lot of people wanted to go further southeast; and some people wanted to go the west. And one lady was so anxious, and she been telling people even when she's got no business, "We go to the west, west, -- westward!" Oh! And then her husband, tempting the chief of Katmai, make people go westward and the lady, his wife, advise him to beg him to go westward. Okay, they decide (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

The differences in Kosbruk's and Father Harry's accounts of the move are easily explained. First is the choice of narrative emphasis. In all his narratives Kosbruk emphasized the disaster's magnitude and the fact that the people were for a time at the mercy of awesome and uncontrollable forces, as if he wanted his audience to understand the ordeal that his generation had gone through. Second, as a young man of 18, he had not been involved in decision-making as the village elders deliberated on a new home site.

Father Harry, on the other hand, was a man in a position of authority when his versions of the story were

recorded. He was village chief and a priest, accustomed to making decisions and being respected for his leadership abilities. His narratives show the audience, both younger Alutiiqs and white people, that the elders were masters of their own destiny in the past as in the present, that they were able to forge good lives out of a disaster. Although he had been only a child at the time of the eruption, his accounts emphasize the part of the experience which later became pertinent to his position in the community.

Various accounts of the move to Perryville differ in another small but telling detail. The government agent who accompanied the people to "compel building, fishing, etc." was a Mr. Nash of the U.S. Bureau of Education. Previously unacquainted with the Alaska Peninsula residents, he was picked up at Seldovia and transported with them to the new village. He is never mentioned in the Perryvillers' accounts. From their point of view, his role must have been superfluous, for the people did not need someone to tell them to build shelters and put up fish. Furthermore, his presence is contradictory to the message of self-determination which Father Harry, in particular, wanted to communicate. Similarly, the role of Father Aleksander Petelin, emphasized in Martin's *National Geographic* article (Martin 1913) and by church fathers (AOM 1916:573), is mentioned in only one Alutiiq account (Phillips 1992).

First Landing

The first place the people landed was at the head of Ivanof Bay. In its protected harbor they set up tents and began to seine for fish using a net given them by one of the canneries (USRCS AR 1913:99). They began immediately to dry fish for the winter. However, local tradition has it that there were already two Norwegian trappers living at the bay. They told the people that it was not a good place for a village, for snowslides occurred, ice formed in the bay in the winter, and land animals were scarce. Father Harry said,

> Oh, the people get excited. "We not going to select this kind of place where we can't go in and out." . . . The people didn't know any better that they were further down south than where they used to be up here in Katmai and Douglas. Right away the people have a meeting and then they go out and look for location for village. And they selected Perryville, here where we are today. And these two Norwegians, they . . . fooled the marshal escorting the people. . . . They all believe it (Kaiakokonok 1975a).

Kosbruk was more direct about the Perryvillers' attitude toward the resident trappers: "That guy, the guy called bullshit. The winter time you got snow right down to the water." [Interviewer's question: "This is what they guy told you?"] "Yeah. And never. Never snow right down there" (Kosbruk 1975a).

Meanwhile, the residents of Afognak and Kodiak Islands were interested in learning that the mainlanders had found a new village. The event was described in *The Orphanage Newsletter,* published by the Baptist orphanage on Woody Island, as follows:

> The people of Katmai village . . . , about one hundred in all, have been taken by the *SS Manning* to Ivanof Bay . . . where the Government has set them up in housekeeping, furnishing them everything from houses to dories and a seine.
>
> . . . For once in their lives, at least, the people of the new village were thoroughly clean, and with complete new outfits, have a clean start in life. . . . Taking everything into consideration the people of Katmai are in far better circumstances now than they were before the eruption, and they, at least, have reason to be thankful for the disaster (quoted in Harvey 1991:114).

This picture is far different from the Alutiiq participants' accounts. An unmistakable tone of paternalism and distaste pervades the Baptist superintendent's message. This and his lack of empathy for the victims of the disaster again convey the social and cultural distance between the Perryvillers and the residents of Kodiak, who in this case were Protestant missionaries.[52]

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[52]These sentiments had much to do with a religious battle for souls which the newly arrived Baptist missionaries and entrenched Orthodox priests had been waging for nearly 30 years. The situation is described in

Reintegration: Home at Last

The 1913 Annual Report of the USRCS tells of moving the new village of Perry, named after the captain of the *Manning*. USRCS ships had left the villagers on July 8, 1912 at Ivanof Bay. On August 1 when the *Manning* returned to check on the people, the crew was told that Ivanof Bay was not a suitable location for a village. Resident Norwegian trappers are not mentioned explicitly in the official report, which merely states,

> Because of excessive rains and reports regarding snow and ice conditions in the winter the

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a letter written by teacher and missionary's wife Ida Roscoe in 1886:

> The condition of the poor people [of Kodiak] is most lamentable. Drunkenness is the curse of the country. I do not believe there is an adult member of the Greek [Russian Orthodox] church in this place who does not drink both beer and whiskey, which they manufacture. The church does not seem to discountenance drunkenness in the least. In fact, the priest and other church officials set the example. The priest [Father Pëtr S. Dobrovolskii] has often been badly under the influence of strong drink. The people are greatly addicted to petty thieving, lying, etc. Drunken rows are of common occurrence.
>
> . . . We do not see the Greek church is doing anything to help these people Heavenward. On the contrary, it is doing all it can to hinder them from becoming enlightened Christian people (quoted in Roscoe 1992:14-15).

> natives desired to leave the place and locate about 13 miles to the eastward. . . . The proposed place was inspected by Captain Perry, accompanied by Mr. Nash and four natives, and approved (USRCS AR 1913:93-4).

At the new location, the men found a recently abandoned barabara which was dry inside, saw numerous animal tracks, and were told by a Norwegian named Mr. Brandel (presumably not one of the Norwegians from Ivanof Bay; according to the 1910 census he lived in Chignik with his wife and nine children) that the weather was good and fish were plentiful at the proposed site.

USRCS cutters continued to check on the community periodically that summer and succeeding summers. In 1913, a year after the people had settled there, the USRCS Cutter *Unalga* reported that all was well in the village, except that there was no church and no bell. The following month, the steamer *Yukon* was wrecked on Unimak Island, and the captain of the steamer promised its bell to the villagers for their church (USRCS AR 1914:163). This was delivered in 1914. Captain Crisp of the *Tahoma*, which presented the bell, reported,

> I never before saw natives show so much appreciation and before I left the chief gave thanks again for the bell (he can speak a little English), but at the same time he wanted to know when we would bring lumber for a church (USRCS AR 1915).

And so the village stayed at the present site of Perryville although, ironically, a number of villagers soon established winter trapping cabins at Ivanof Bay because land mammals were in fact much more abundant there than at Perryville. In 1965, a permanent village at Ivanof Bay was established (Davis 1986:8).

The Katmai Story as History and Myth

Perryville's Katmai story is a rich source of ethnic information. First, it contains messages about what it means to be an Alutiiq, messages which are particularly prominent in contrast with the story as told by outsiders. Second, it has become an almost mythical origin story which is itself symbolic of Alutiiq culture. And third, it marks the most important moment in Alutiiq history for Perryvillers, the watershed in terms of which all other moments are viewed.

Differences in Performance

There are two types of differences between Alutiiq and non-Alutiiq versions and among the various Alutiiq performances. The first differences are attributable to various cultural perspectives and understandings of "what really happened." The fact that they are different

illustrates one of the main lessons folklore and ethnohistory have to offer, that context is inseparable from text, perspective from history. As Portelli (1991) pointed out,

> Rather than replacing previous truths with alternative ones, . . . oral history has made us uncomfortably aware of the elusive quality of historical truth itself (1991:viii-ix).

On the one hand, non-Alutiiq participants and observers communicated the assumption that the Alutiiqs needed help and guidance in performing even the most rudimentary tasks. On the other, the Alutiiqs saw themselves as not only competent but actually superior to their benefactors in some ways. Their stories emphasize their active role in effecting their own salvation.

The contrast in perspective is illustrated in many examples: the failure of USRCS accounts to mention the kayakers; the Alutiiqs' scant mention of their stay in Afognak; the omission in Alutiiq accounts of Mr. Nash's role; a different slant on the decision-making process for finding a new homesite; the contention in *The Orphanage Newsletter* that the Alutiiqs had been previously unclean and were better off because of the eruption; the Alutiiqs' success in surviving the ordeal through planning (gathering water), prayer, and action (sending the kayakers out); the respective emphasis on and neglect of Father Petelin's role

in the rescue; and the nefarious part played by Norwegian trappers which went unmentioned in USRCS accounts.

Both Alutiiq and non-Alutiiq accounts of the Katmai disaster refer to the assistance the people received from the USRCS, but again the messages are different. USRCS personnel were unaware of the magnitude of the Alutiiqs' experiences; they hadn't been at Kaflia Bay, and they faced a language barrier which kept them from learning what had happened there in detail. The Kodiak and Afognak residents, likewise, were largely unaware of particulars of the mainlanders' experience. They had lived through the disaster themselves in large part through the heroic efforts of the USRCS. Their accounts of the Katmai eruption, like the officers', therefore understandably focused on the lifesaving role the cutter crews played.

The peninsula Alutiiq stories communicate something else. They show that Natives and whites can work together, but must do so on an equal footing. Their narratives emphasized that Alutiiqs, like all people in a similar situation, needed help in relocating and re-outfitting themselves, but they did not need to be given food, told what to do, or how to do it.

The Katmai story also shows variations in emphasis from Alutiiq storyteller to storyteller, audience to audience. These have to do not with macro-context or cultural perspective, but with micro-context, which

includes the individual interests of the performer, community concerns, and the makeup of the audience.

For instance, George Kosbruk's message of disaster lived through was directed variously to the youth of Perryville (the article in the student publication *Elwani*; 1976) and to outside audiences (the videotaped elders' conference performance in Dillingham; n.d.). His videotaped performance at the elders' conference also contains a message about inept *Milik'aanat* (English-speaking Caucasians) who cannot sort out Alutiiq social structure and culture. As one of the only refugees who spoke any English in 1912, Kosbruk was named translator and came to be called "Katmai Chief." He obviously felt that this was inappropriate, irreverent, and ignorant. Kosbruk told his Yup'ik audience,

> Not one of the boys spoke English, not one. There were over three hundred people and not one spoke English. I was the only one; once in a while I spoke some, all right. I helped out all those people that time. I helped them out a lot. Then their captain started calling me "Katmai Chief." That's all he called me.
>
> "Ah, you shut up. I'm not a chief. What are you talking about, 'chief'?" (n.d.)

Father Harry's narratives and printed story communicate a strong sense of Alutiiq self-reliance by emphasizing the actions Katmai residents took toward their own salvation and minimizing (through partial omission) the

role of non-Natives. Father Harry was considered a gifted orator who gave good sermons; this suggests that he conveyed the impression of self-reliance intentionally. I assume that like Alutiiq elders today who agree to record oral narratives, he perceived that his audience consisted of both Native youth (almost everyone in the village was younger than he, and he was accustomed to preaching to them) and non-Native outsiders (in the persons of both his interviewers and others with whom they might share the tape). By example Father Harry exhorted young people to continue the tradition of self-reliance, not to become dependent on others or modern technology nor to fall prey to the forces of divisiveness within the community. He used a number of situations as examples of how Alutiiqs survived through their own intelligence, experience, and inventiveness; for instance, the "old man from Katmai" who told villagers to put up water and turn their kayaks upside down; the people who took advantage of a beached whale to soak up oil for lamps to use inside the dark cabins during the eruption; the implication that the people's prayers were responsible for the return of the light; the kayakers' role in bringing help; the elders' role in determining the location for their new village; and many others (cf. especially Kaiakokonok 1975a). Through these same examples I believe Father Harry meant to remind outsiders of the dignity and competence of the Alutiiqs.

In hindsight it also appears that the two men's published (Kaiakokonok 1956; Kosbruk 1976) and recorded stories, dating between 1956 and 1975, conveyed a special message to Perryvillers who between those years underwent a major community schism precipitated by non-Orthodox missionary activity. Both Father Harry and Kosbruk considered their salvation to be in large part due to supplications made to the Virgin Mary and God. Furthermore, they recalled that those who had formerly lived in the villages of Douglas, Katmai, and Kaflia came together to found Perryville. Though unstated, the message that village unity under the Orthodox God not only saved the people in the past, but should continue to do so, seems inherent in the narratives.

I was also told parts of the Katmai story by Ralph Phillips of Perryville and Joe Kalmakoff of Ivanof Bay. Their accounts were directed both toward me, as the immediate audience, and toward their fellow Alutiiqs, since it was understood that I was recording the stories for future distribution. I believe that the two men wanted to communicate to me instructions in subsistence and geography (this was a prevalent motif in all my conversations with Phillips), information on the general competence of Alutiiqs, and a criticism of self-serving non-Natives (personified in their accounts by the Norwegian trappers) (Kalmakoff 1992; Phillips 1992).

To fellow Alutiiqs and Alaskans in general, they sought to validate their historical and geographical claims in the Perryville and Ivanof Bay areas. Earlier in his interview Kalmakoff had discussed the effects the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) had on attitudes toward land ownership:

> After Land Claims came a division, a real division. That's where it was. It was a bad thing in my way of thinking. It separated the people amongst themselves and from anyone. Real estate, ownership of real estate and boundaries was probably the worst thing that could ever happen to a unique people. Land. The relationship.
>
> Everything, all the resource was so much respected, that it was better managed than by the state or federal government. My grandpa was really strict on that part. He said, "You're the managers. You're responsible. You take care of the land that you live by. You never better be abusive toward the land or its people that you need to help you take care of the land." Always one needs the other one to exist. Everything has its balance. Nature has its balance. Course, that's being people of nature, the subsistence way of life, that's really deep down (1992).

His later discussion of the founding of Perryville was told in the context of this earlier comment.

Phillips, who lives in Perryville and has hunted and trapped up and down the coast from Stepovak to Chignik, likewise testified that his forefathers had known and understood the entire territory (including Ivanof Bay) long ago.

In a sense both men carried forth the theme of unity brought up by Father Harry and Kosbruk. While Phillips validated claims to Ivanof Bay, Kalmakoff legitimized the claims of Ivanof Bay residents to the Katmai story and hence to Perryville. He also legitimized his family's choice of Ivanof Bay as a site for the village since it had been the original Perryville, unfairly denied his forefathers by the lies of the Norwegian trappers.

Thus, the accounts of both men serve to build a bridge between Perryville and Ivanof Bay. Through the stories the two places are affirmed to be part of the same larger territory, which in turn belongs to all its residents. This bridge is especially important to residents of the two communities today. They have reestablished social relationships; for instance, Olga Kalmakoff often travels to Perryville in the fall to pick berries, while Perryville residents sometimes journey to Ivanof Bay for clams. However, a new religious schism threatens Perryville. In the fall of 1991 two missionaries arrived in the village and established a Bible reading group which by the spring of 1992 consisted of eight Perryville adults. Villagers seemed determined to treat the current situation differently from the one that resulted in Ivanof Bay's founding. Parents refrained from haranguing their converted children, though they lamented the situation freely to others. Kinship relationships, once confirmed

through church activities and Orthodox namesday parties, came to be reaffirmed through subsistence activities, sharing of *banyus*, school activities, babysitting grandchildren, joint enjoyment of "Native foods," and, significantly, evocation of a common history. That history has become an important tool in maintaining solidarity within the potentially fracturing community.

The Story as Myth

Vansina (1985:12-13) distinguishes oral tradition from oral history:[53] the latter is an account told by a living witness whereas the former is at least one generation removed from its source. As history becomes tradition, several changes occur in story, structure, and function. The meaning of the message reverberates with contemporary concerns. The story undergoes an aesthetic restructuring to conform with accepted local folkloric conventions, and common motifs arise. For instance, a "floating gap" sometimes emerges, whereby the story's action is set in an era all its own which is not explicitly connected with

[53]As I noted earlier, some oral historians do not use these terms in precisely the same way as Vansina. Portelli (1991), for instance, found that oral narratives refer to the interests of the performers regardless of temporal distance from the event itself. The important point for this research, one on which there is general agreement among oral historians, is that fairly predictable changes *do* occur in oral accounts as they are retold through time.

other historic occurrences either before or after it. Culture heroes personifying cultural values sometimes appear. Similarly, founding fathers are often accorded unwonted fame and heroic status. The story itself and the images it contains become symbolic of cultural identity (Vansina 1985).

The Katmai story, as told in Perryville today, is Perryville's origin story. Like myth, it serves as the symbol of the community: an image of a volcano is painted on Perryville School's gymnasium wall alongside a portrait of Father Harry and the school mascot, the eagle.

Structure. The tale is structurally similar to both biblical and Central Yup'ik origin stories (see, for instance, stories of the flood and the theft and retrieval of light in Nelson 1899:452, 461, 483). An outline of the story's structure is as follows:[54]

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[54]The structural outline that follows is based on my perception of plot elements and therefore may not correspond to an emic view of the narrative structure. Unfortunately, the manner in which the narratives were elicited -- through question-and-answer interviews and as written accounts -- makes the discovery of the underlying structure particularly difficult. For instance, during the interviews some questions required that the storytellers cover topics out of sequence, others interrupted the flow of speech. In this situation it would be challenging to determine underlying structure through placement of particles (cf. Hymes 1981:318ff.), pause location and length (Tedlock 1983), or a combination of rhetorical structures (Woodbury 1987), though the results might provide helpful data on Alutiiq performance practices.

I. original paradise in which premonition of impending danger is felt, preparations made;

II. disaster which induces liminal experience inside tomblike houses;

A. divine help is received through prayer;

B. three messengers embark across water on a pilgrimage for human help;

III. people flee from original destroyed paradise (Katmai/Douglas/Kaflia Bay);

A. they enter a state of liminality again during their stay in Afognak;

B. the pilgrimage of the whole community begins;

C. people are expelled from their first choice, Ivanof Bay;

IV. finally, reintegration becomes complete after settling in Perryville.

The story moves from paradise through liminality to reintegration, suggesting that a central message is the birth and maturing of a people and their community. Van Gennep (1960) identified this common tripartite structure of *rites de passage* -- rituals through which individuals advance from one social status to another. The ritual structure includes separation, margin or *limen*, and reaggregation. Turner (1974) focused on society-wide phenomena, suggesting that another purpose of similarly

structured rituals is the reaffirmation of individuals' commitment to and social place in communities.

Pertinent to the Katmai story, Turner was particularly concerned with social activities aimed at strengthening solidarity or *communitas* (1974:231-2), which he defined as a model of

> society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (1969:96).

Turner demonstrated that liminality, van Gennep's middle stage, is an important means of generating *communitas*. As he uses the term, liminality is the ambiguous state between two normal states, "frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (Turner 1969:95). This is an apt description of the time between the eruption and the final settling in Perryville, a period characterized by temporary passivity, literal nakedness within the sweltering houses and a feeling of timelessness. The common experience among the victims of the eruption fostered a newfound sense of *communitas* among the former residents of three communities, Katmai, Douglas, and Kaflia, and forged them into a single community. Through its physical and emotional hardships the experience

produced in the people a sense of having seen something of the "Divine," confirming their role as a chosen people and their story as part of the "Divine story" (cf. Turner 1969:96; 1974:238).

Establishment of Canon. The Katmai story has moved closer to the sacred realm of myth in another important way: its structure and contents have become nearly canonized, if not petrified. The marginality of accounts like Barbara Sanook's is discussed above. Similarly, few Perryvillers would allow me to record their personal versions of the story, deferring instead to Father Harry's 1956 written account and George Kosbruk's 1976 *Elwani* article. Those people who did make recordings provided only fragments of the story, focusing on the search for a new home and skimming over reference to the ordeal experienced during the eruption itself.

Contemporary Alutiiqs' reluctance to tell the story when there is a more authoritative version available is in keeping with cultural standards of truth -- in any storytelling situation, eyewitnesses are deferred to if they are present. Father Harry and George are no longer present, but their words remain and act as their surrogates. Unlike living storytellers who tailor their presentations to audience and context, their written

accounts cannot change. In this sense the story has moved from the realm of living history to solidifed canon.

Symbols. In investigating symbolic dimensions of the Katmai story, I strove to discover symbols which have a general resonance for performer and audience alike, following Leach's (1967) proviso that "symbolism . . . is *public* property; its immediate source is not private psychology but a cultural rule . . ." (1967:85; emphasis in the original). I enter the discussion from the related stance that unless a story has meaning to its performer and audience, it will not be retold. The task then is to discover the meaning -- or more accurately, some of the meanings -- which the Katmai story holds for Perryvillers.[55] Cohen (1986) expressed well the challenge of interpreting cultural meaning when he said,

> Modern ethnography has to discriminate between the common mask and the complex variations it conceals. It has also to be sensitive to the possible discrepencies between intended and received meanings which are introduced into communication by the vagaries of the process of interpretation (1986:13).

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[55]Cf. Turner's (1967) reminder of the multi-vocality of many ritual -- and by extension I would add literary -- symbols (1967:50). Cf. also Fernandez's (1965) cautions about assumptions of symbolic consensus in ritual.

Unfortunately, I could not ask Father Harry or George Kosbruk for their intentions in telling the stories, nor could I ask them to explicate the metaphors they used. At best I could study their recorded words, ask the current adult audience how they understood the narratives, and infer the original storytellers' meanings -- an admittedly risky business unless external evidence supports the inferences. I followed Geertz's position as closely as possible:

> My own position has been . . . to try to keep the analysis of symbolic forms as closely tied as I could to concrete social events and occasions, the public world of common life, and to organize it in such a way that the connections between theoretical formulations and descriptive interpretations were unobscured by appeals to the dark sciences (1988:550).

I alluded above to several important symbols imbedded in the Katmai story: the characterization of Katmai as a paradise (an attitude confirmed by contemporary Perryvillers who have never been there), the anonymity of the kayakers sent to Afognak as representatives of the group rather than individual heroes, and the mushroom-shaped cloud rising out of the volcano as symbolic of the destruction of the old way of life. In emphasizing discontinuities between past and present life, these symbolic references give the story a mythical flavor.

Anther potent symbol to which I believe Perryvillers respond is the emergence of the people from their buried houses after the eruption, reminiscent of both Christ's resurrection from his tomb and the emergence of a shaman from his journey to another world, itself a sort of rebirth (see the *Puglaa'allria* story in Chapter V; cf. also Fienup-Riordan 1990:53). Similarly, the survivors' pilgrimage in search of a new home is comparable to the expulsion from Eden, of landfall after the great flood, of the exile in and exodus out of Egypt.

I believe Father Harry intentionally evoked biblical and Christian images. A layreader until 1971 when he became an ordained priest, Father Harry was intimately familiar with the Bible (as indeed are all Perryville elders) and was practiced in the use of parable and metaphor. Furthermore, Perryvillers would have understood his use of metaphor; I was often told biblical parables as explanations for contemporary circumstances, and a common theme in my conversations with Perryville elders was the contention that the ancient Alutiiqs understood Christian teachings even before they knew there was a Christ. Thus people are accustomed to likening seemingly dissimilar actions to a common cause and set of symbols, and that cause and those symbols are frequently Christian in nature. In addition, although I never heard Father Harry give a sermon, I did attend church on several occasions when

Father Maxim Isaac, visiting from Chignik Lake, explained the relationship of biblical teachings to modern village life. A connection between story and real life is thus well established in Perryville.

The importance of Orthodox images and explanations further suggests that the Katmai story reinforces the Perryvillers' feeling of being a chosen people (though not necessarily *the* chosen people), alive only because God willed it. Being among the chosen is, in fact, a common attitude in all religions; in this case that sense is intensified through the remembered story of survival through a catastrophic disaster.

Father Harry and George Kosbruk may have made intentional references to shamanic rituals as well (i.e., the rebirth of a shaman), though these references are probably meaningful only to older Perryvillers today. The issue of shamanism is discussed below; it is important at this point to realize that despite a century and a half of Christianity, shamanism was believed to have been practiced in Perryville as recently as 30 years ago. I was told by many people about a particular resident who was a practicing shaman within the lifetime of nearly all Perryville adults.

The Katmai Story as the Beginning of History

Euroamerican histories of Alaska customarily divide time into three periods: the precontact, which covers archaeological data, the Russian period, and the American period (e.g., Chapter II of this work). Contemporary Perryville history also divides time into three eras, but the respective categories cover different years. Older Alutiiqs speak of the pre-Katmai period, the Perryville years up to World War II, and the present. The division between the pre- and post-Katmai eras is seen to have been of a much greater magnitude than that separating pre- and post-war Perryville.

People describe life in Katmai very differently from life in Perryville after the eruption. In Katmai, humans had ready access to the supernatural through which they learned proper behavior which serves as a model today. People spoke Alutiiq, ate healthy Native foods almost exclusively, traveled in sealskin kayaks, and lived in warm, draftless barabaras. There was no drinking of alcohol, and people helped each other. They were hardy and healthy, able to work with an intensity unimagined by today's youth. There were community houses where people learned their Native dances and the proper rules for hunting and disposing of animals. That this image is not

totally accurate (see Chapter III and Barbara Sanook's story) is irrelevant, for it is generally believed.

Perryvillers stress the discontinuities between life in Katmai and Perryville. Perryville was a modern village from the beginning. Seventy-year-old women today insist that they never saw carved ivory or bone dolls but instead played with porcelain dolls and china tea sets. They recall their beribboned straw hats ordered from catalogues. They wore sno-packs rather than mukluks and played on swings rigged between the pilings of the cannery dock. Men speak wistfully of the straight, neat streets bordered by orderly houses that used to characterize the village, in contrast with the hodgepodge of footpaths and idiosyncratic dwellings there now. They admit that they never witnessed Alutiiq dancing, there being no *qasgiq* in Perryville to take the place of the one destroyed in Katmai. In effect, the residents of Katmai and Douglas invented themselves anew when they became Perryvillers.[56]

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[56]Cf. Wagner (1975) and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) who have written about cultural invention. Wagner argues that tradition and customs are dependent on *continual* reinvention by society, not merely at times of catastrophic change (Wagner 1975:50). Hobsbawm and Ranger examine the conscious practice whereby societies invent traditions "to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition . . . [and] attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past" They see this practice as a response to "the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:1-2). It should be clear that for Perryvillers the process of cultural reinvention was,

The Katmai Story and Alutiiq Ethnicity

Did the Katmai eruption strengthen the sense of an overall Alutiiq ethnicity? I have stated that the Katmai story has become an important origin story, yet Alutiiqs already had an origin story which explained how they were related to each other (see Chapter III). Why would they need another?

The new story was not superfluous. It was not overlaid upon the old stories but replaced them. Today no one remembers the traditional Alutiiq myths, but everyone knows the Katmai story. I discuss reasons for the wholesale replacement of one set of myths by another in the next chapter; at this point it is important to understand how the new story differs from the old ones and the extent of its influence.

The Katmai eruption story contains an element that traditional myths did not: it shows that ethnic differentiation was present at the beginning of recorded Alutiiq history. Thus an important message conveyed through this origin story is Alutiiq ethnic

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in the first place, precipitated by external factors, and, in the second, not entirely a conscious endeavor but rather a redefinition of self which was based on discontinuities between pre- and post-disaster life.

distinctiveness. In fact, the relationship between Alutiiqs and outsiders is the part of the story which most living storytellers emphasize today.

In the beginning of the story, the Alutiiqs were geographically isolated, but they did not live under a constant shadow of ethnicity or minority status since most of their interactions took place among themselves (but cf. Sanook's 1968 interview). Father Harry's and George Kosbruk's narratives admit the existence of few oppositional situations in which ethnicity needed to be or was activated. By the end of the story, on the other hand, the Katmai-Douglas-Kaflia Bay Alutiiqs were unified among themselves and contrasted against Afognak Creoles, government officials, and Norwegian trappers alike. It was actually living *among* rather than *apart from* others that generated a strengthening of ethnic boundaries.

This is shown in several episodes. First, survival at Kaflia Bay through common effort forged important bonds among the refugees. Then the fact that the Creole population of Afognak did not admit the refugees into their society, despite a common language and religion, brought home to the Alutiiqs the existence of social distinctions which had not operated at Katmai. Seemingly minor differences in dress and physical appearance were seen to be socially meaningful.

Third, linguistic and cultural differences made communication with the USRCS difficult, resulting in help given that may not have been needed and unwarranted assumptions made that insulted the Alutiiqs. Later experiences with the Norwegian trappers at Ivanof Bay reinforced this newly strengthened social integration and intensified a feeling of exploitation at the hands of white people.[57] After the Katmai eruption, the Perryvillers felt themselves to be both specially chosen and qualitatively different from the Creoles on Kodiak and the whites everywhere.

The question still remains whether this is a single community's story or a tale with a pan-Alutiiq significance. The question can be answered by referring to both the historic record and contemporary social contacts. Although the Katmai story as told today implies that all Alutiiqs from Katmai, Douglas, and Kaflia Bay moved to Perryville after the eruption, that was not the case. A number of people settled in the 20-year-old coastal village of Kanatak instead. They continued the seasonal pattern established at least 100 years earlier by the people of Ugashik (Davydov 1977:196), wherein they lived on the Pacific coast during the winter and at breakup traveled

[57]As discussed in the following chapters, this theme of exploitation has become important in the folklore of peninsula Alutiiqs.

over the portage to Becharof Lake, down the Egegik River to Egegik, and finally down the coast of Bristol Bay to Pilot Point and inland to Ugashik. An alternative portage took them over to the Ugashik Lakes and directly downriver to Ugashik.

Once in Egegik or Pilot Point, the Kanatak Alutiiqs fished for money and food, interacting daily with resident Yup'iks. Still, they remained (and still remain) aware of an ethnic distinction between themselves and the year-round local residents. Their daily lives were identical, many belonged to the same church, and the languages were very close.[58] That the Alutiiqs insisted on maintaining an ethnic boundary illustrates the boundary's symbolic nature. If current attitudes reflect those of 75 years ago, the boundary between Alutiiq and Yup'ik was based on three things. First was the idea that Yup'iks and Alutiiqs had experienced separate histories; specifically, the Katmai eruption is seen to be part of Alutiiq rather than Yup'ik history. Second, the yearly cycles of the two peoples were slightly different: the Yup'iks stayed on the Bristol Bay side of the peninsula throughout the year or journeyed up the river to the interior, while the Alutiiqs made seasonal

[58]Egegik resident Nick Abalama, who calls himself -- and is called by others -- an Alutiiq, was interviewed in 1990 by Yup'ik-speaker Marie Meade. She reported to me that he spoke in perfectly standard Central Yup'ik, although he claimed it to be Alutiiq (Meade, pers. comm. 1992).

journeys to Kanatak on the Pacific side. And finally, some Alutiiqs (though not those who actually lived in Pilot Point or Egegik) have indicated that they feel that the Yup'iks, as "Eskimos," are exotic and perhaps a bit primitive in comparison with their own culture.[59]

Thus, following the Katmai eruption, these new Kanatak residents remained in the northeastern portion of the Alaska Peninsula and utilized resources seasonally in the Bering Sea drainage, while still maintaining ties to their relatives in Perryville. They passed down the Katmai story not as an origin myth as among Perryvillers, but as a restatement of common history with other Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs.

Today the mixed Alutiiq-Eskimo-White communities of Pilot Point and Egegik continue to maintain occasional but unbroken articulation with the Alutiiqs who live to the southwest.[60] Some intermarriages have occurred between

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[59]Cf. Fienup-Riordan 1990 for a discussion of widespread images of Eskimos. Some Perryville and Chignik Alutiiqs made stereotypical comments to me about the "Eskimos" up north -- what they eat, the way they talk, their inability to speak English. Other people mused aloud about cultural differences between Alutiiqs and Eskimos, though with no apparent negative connotations (eg., the way fish is cooked, "typical Eskimo" clothing). Conversely, I was told by an Egegik resident that he had heard the Chignik Lake and Perryville people referred to as more "Native" than the Egegik people, the implication being that they were in some sense more "primitive."

[60]Communication between the northern Bristol Bay Alaska Peninsula villages and the southwestern Alutiiq villages has increased in recent years since the major commercial air route originates at King Salmon and proceeds

members of the various communities. The kinship relationships that do exist are periodically reinforced through resource sharing and visiting.[61]

Before the eruption, other enclaves of Alutiiq speakers had lived in the Bering Sea villages of Masriq (Meshik), Ilnik, and Unangashik, as well as in Chignik on the Pacific side. They and their descendents also claim a part in the Katmai story, legitimized in two ways. First, Chignik Bay and Lagoon were said to have been completely covered by floating pumice following the eruption. This affected fishing and travel for Alutiiqs residing there as well as those along the Katmai coast. Second, the new residents of Perryville quickly became incorporated into Chignik Alutiiq society, first through the commercial fishing industry which took them to the Chignik area each summer. After 1922 the Perryville school also contributed to increased social integration because the Chignik school was operated only during the summer months. This led some Chignik residents to move to Perryville temporarily for the winter so their children could attend its school. Finally,

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to Egegik, Pilot Point, Port Heiden, the Chigniks, and finally Perryville and Ivanof Bay.

[61]For instance, a Pilot Point woman, originally from Chignik Lake, spent Christmas 1993 in Chignik Lake starring. When she and her family returned home, eight Chignik Lake residents went with her to star in Pilot Point and Port Heiden.

through the years, intermarriages between Chignik and Perryville Alutiiqs extended personal ties to the Katmai story so that it is now seen to be of interest to virtually everyone.

The Katmai story has thus become a symbol recognized by Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs in all villages as an important turning point in history. It is understood to be Perryville's particular origin story but plays some part in virtually every family's history regardless of residence. As such, it serves to show the common history which all Alutiiqs share.

As during precontact days, the Alutiiq identity configuration varies from community to community, containing in the northeastern villages more marginal reference to the Katmai eruption while in the southwestern locales it forms a central element. This variation in the strength of the Katmai symbol illustrates the fact that today, as in the past, the Alutiiq ethnic network is neither uniform nor geographically confined and defined, but rather centers on and radiates out from particular communities.

CHAPTER V

PRE-KATMAI NARRATIVES

Alutiiq Narrative Genres

Volumes have been devoted to the definition and study of myth, but most definitions contain the following elements: Myths are "prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past" (Bascom 1984:9). Further, myths generally "contain information about decisive, creative events in the beginning of time" which function as models and

> can be characterised as ontological: they are incorporated and integrated into a coherent view of the world, and they describe very important aspects of life and the universe. . . . The context of myth is, in normal cases, ritual (emphasis in the original; Honko 1984:50-1).

"Legends," on the other hand, are described as

> prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today. Legends are more often secular than sacred, and their principal characters are human (Bascom 1984:9).

A brief discussion of narrative genres in the folklore of neighboring Yup'iks provides a framework for an examination of the largely undocumented Alutiiq lore. The Yup'ik stories which most closely correspond to the category "myth" as defined above are *qulirat* (plural; singular form *quliraq*). *Qulirat* include, according to Morrow,

> tales which are not ultimately attributable to any known storyteller, and which include stock characters, rather than named persons who are known to have existed . . . . Etiological stories, detailing origins of celestial and geographic features, human customs and ceremonies, and animal characteristics; accounts of the legendary exploits of culture heroes; and ancient tales of animals in their human forms and of human/animal transformations (ms.).

Morrow further notes that "*quliraq* narratives often begin with generalized locations ('there was a village by a river')" (Morrow ms.). The Alutiiq word glossed as "myth" is *unigkuaq* (plural *unigkuat*) (Leer 1978:79), a cognate of Iñupiat (*unipkaaq/unipchaaq/ulipkaaq*) and Siberian Yup'ik (*unigpaghaq*) terms (Morrow ms; cf. also Birket-Smith 1953:143).

A second Yup'ik genre consists of *qanemcit* (plural). These stories describe events which took place after the current world order was established. They

> include anecdotes and historical accounts -- for example, personal encounters with ghosts or

> other beings, accounts of famines or illness, and feats of great shamans or hunters whose names are generally known (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1984).

The English gloss "legend" has been applied to *qanemciq* narratives (Lantis 1953:158-9). A word translated as "story" or "account," *quli'anguaq* appears to have been the analogous Alutiiq genre (Leer 1978:255; pers. comm. 1992).[62] In this chapter I will use the Alutiiq terms *unigkuaq* and *quli'anguaq* when referring to Alutiiq genre designations, though mindful that most information about the terms derives from comparative Central Yup'ik data.

The correspondence between Yup'ik *qanemcit* and European "legend" as defined above is incomplete. For instance, at present the *qanemciq* category includes two non-legendary forms, the personal memorate and the radio/television broadcast. Further, supernatural elements are prominent in both *qulirat* and *qanemcit*. This fact mirrors the Yup'ik worldview which does not separate phenomena into discrete categories of sacred and profane, supernatural and natural (Fienup-Riordan 1990:78). Morrow specifically cautions that *qulirat* and *qanemcit* are not firmly bounded nor mutually exclusive categories. She describes the "basic, although not rigid distinction" as

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[62]The postbase -nguaq (pl. -nguat) means "little, small [noun]."

relative, for "stories are sometimes classified ambiguously" (Morrow, ms.). This qualification likely applies to the classification of traditional Alutiiq lore as well.

The Alutiiq pre-Katmai stories I recorded were called by the tellers either *unigkuat*, *quli'anguat*, or, on separate occasions, both. I found no firm agreement on either the definitions or the distinctions between the two. In fact, they were described as nearly synonymous. Alutiiq elders explained:[63]

"*Unigkuat* are the same as *quli'anguat*."

"*Unigkuat* are bedtime stories, *quli'anguat* are stories told by someone who has come from somewhere else."

"They're the same thing."

"*Unigkuat* are fairy tales."

"*Quli'anguaq*? That means I'll tell you a story. . . . *Unigkuaq* means fiction stories. Something that isn't true."

Leer (1992) reports that in other Alutiiq areas *unigkuat* are recognized as being myths that happened long ago and *quli'anguat* are seen as more historical or legendary. Nonetheless, he has found also that the

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[63]The statements that follow have been taken from either portions of transcribed recordings or notes I made as informants discussed the genres.

distinction between the two is becoming blurred in many Alutiiq communities (pers. comm. 1992).

Alutiiq genres, like their Yup'ik counterparts, probably never have been delineated strictly. The disagreement over the respective meanings of the two terms results, I believe, from several factors. On one level, it may represent an example of "the philosophical expression of multiple simultaneous reference [which] pervades Yupik society and encompasses phenomena" (Morrow 1990:154) and "a negative reinforcement of analysis and specification" (Morrow 1990:155).

Second, the apparent confusion may indicate the uneasy fit between Alutiiq and English folklore genres. There really is no single word which adequately renders either Alutiiq term.

Third, informants' characterizations of *unigkuat* as "fairy tales" or "fiction stories" may reflect derogatory comments by American teachers about the "superstitions" described in the stories. One man explained to me, "I don't know, to me, I think, most of the people are ashamed of their traditions." When I asked why, he explained that his generation had been punished whenever they spoke Alutiiq in school. This made them wary of mentioning anything related to their language, including the old stories, in front of white people.

In the following pages I present evidence that suggests that the confusion represents something more basic: a collapsing of the two genres which represents a shift in Alutiiq conceptions of the lore and of their history. I believe that for contemporary Alutiiq storytellers, particularly those from Perryville, there is no longer a difference between the two types of stories. Elders know the terms and heard examples of each as youths. But the stories they tell today are different in an important way from the stories they heard. On the one hand today's narratives are mythic in their emphasis on the supernatural and in their remote, unchanged and paradisiacal setting. On the other hand, the types of stories considered *qulirat* among Yup'iks are rarely told by peninsula Alutiiqs today. That genre, as formerly understood among Alutiiqs (cf. Lantis 1938), seems to have dropped out of the local folk repertoire. I was told no Raven trickster or origin stories, nor did I meet anyone who remembered hearing any. I was told only three transformation tales, two involving wronged wives who were changed into bears and the third a race of killerwhales who beat the people of Katmai in a gambling game. People remember hearing other "animal" stories as children but can not recall them.[64] Stories about *a'ula'aqs*, the wild hairy

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[64]One animal story that was recalled was an Aesop's

beings who sometimes abducted people under unexplainable circumstances (discussed in Chapter VII), also commonly are told, but these narratives, though involving paranormal events, for the most part are said to have occurred within living memory.

Mythic Bible stories are also sometimes told, though I more often heard references to the stories than the complete tales themselves. These stories are understood to be part of Alutiiq history insofar as Alutiiqs are part of the human race, but they are not called *unigkuat* and were never offered as examples of "old Alutiiq stories" when I asked people if they remembered any. Two informants clarified the relationship they see between old Alutiiq ways and Christianity. They asserted that even though the elders didn't know Christianity, they lived a Christian life and foretold events described in the Bible. "How did they know?" one man wondered. Thus the Bible stories are seen to have happened long ago to people in other parts of the world but to have been prefigured by the Alutiiqs of old. Partly because of this assumed connection with "old-time" Alutiiqs, Bible stories are seen as appropriate and traditional models for Alutiiqs today.

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fable from the woman's childhood school book.

The disappearance of Alutiiq mythical stories comparable to extant (i.e., in print and oral tradition) Yup'ik *qulirat* can be attributed to two causes: the deaths of an older knowledgeable generation -- all Katmai survivors -- and the discontinuities between life in Katmai and Perryville. In addition, a disastrous measles epidemic in 1932 killed many Perryvillers, most of whom were adults and, presumably, storytellers. All contemporary Perryville storytellers are the children of the eruption's survivors, born after the relocation to Perryville. To them, life in Katmai exists only in stories. I have found no one who has visited the ancestral village site. Yet today's adult Perryvillers describe Katmai as a bountiful, beautiful place. Apparently propelled, at least in part, by Father Harry Kaiakokonok's story of the eruption, Katmai has become a symbolic, mythical place to contemporary peninsula Alutiiqs.

Today's elders grew up in what they see as a progressive and forward-looking community. The canneries began to employ Natives not long after the relocation. American school opened in 1922. Traditional fora for storytelling changed from the "community house" or *qasgiq* to the trapping cabin, from communal locations to individual homes.

Both the stories which are said to have taken place before the Katmai disaster and the story of the Katmai

eruption emphasize mythical elements. But they also contain non-mythical "*quli'anguaq*-like" characteristics. Most describe conflict caused by humans. In these stories, the action involves an evil or foolish agent (often an outsider of some sort) who presents obstacles to harmony or happiness. The characters in some of the stories also are *quli'anguaq*-like: they are particular people who are asserted to have had a direct link with the present, generally through a recently-deceased person who witnessed the story's events or knew the protagonist.

The Mythical Pre-Katmai Eruption Era

In the previous chapter I detailed those parts of the Katmai story which are given a mythical treatment, and suggested that for today's Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs pre-Katmai disaster life was a mythical time.

In other narratives, the pre-Katmai era is portrayed as qualitatively different from life in modern history. It is depicted as a seamless era in which life changed little from day to day, year to year. I was struck by two major Russian and American influences which figure prominently in the stories, Russian Orthodoxy and the fur trade. Alutiiqs, in contrast, do not see these innovations as evidence of an essential shift in lifestyle or world view. Rather, they see them as part of the "baseline" or

"traditional" Alutiiq culture from which modern deviations are measured.

The sacred realm which permeates the pre-Katmai stories reflects a syncretic mixture of Alutiiq shamanism and animism with Russian Orthodoxy. The fact that religion is important in the stories derives from both traditional *unigkuaq* structure and from the interests of contemporary peninsula Alutiiqs. Almost all are deeply religious and many are also interested in the religion and precontact beliefs of the past, although they deny any knowledge of what it might have been.[65]

The second imported element in pre-Katmai stories, Alutiiq economic exploitation during the fur trade, was part of the Alutiiq experience under both the Russian and American systems, yet today's Alutiiqs consider it to have been a wholly Russian phenomenon. That economic system and its inequities are personified in the story of *Macintine* (transcribed below). Macintine is portrayed as the greedy, stingy, bossy, dangerous, self-serving Russian. This type of exploiter has become a stock character in Alutiiq folklore, though he is no longer necessarily a Russian (any

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[65]Some traditional religious practices continue. For instance, members of one large extended family continue to observe the ritual treatment of a bear's skull after it has been killed, wherein they burst its eyes, fill the ear and nasal cavities, and place a stick in the bear's mouth, all to ensure the safety of the hunters and future success in bear hunts. They term this ritual a way of showing "respect" for the bear.

white man will do) and is often stupid as well as stingy. Furthermore, he now frequently is bettered by the Alutiiqs among whom he travels.

As noted in the previous chapter, the eras in Alaska's history which are customarily identified by historians -- *precontact*, *Russian period*, and *American period* -- are irrelevant to Alutiiq storytellers. While they admit that the fur trade happened after the arrival of Russians, they claim to know nothing of life before the Russians arrived. Thus, for them, this represents the earliest stage in their history.

Not only is there no expressed distinction between pre- and post-contact in the stories, but as expected, the Russian and American periods before 1912 are also collapsed and confused in the stories. The tale of the death of "Macintine" is a case in point. Macintine was described to me before the recording began as the "king of Russian America." His tyranny and that of the fur trade in general are remembered as Russian phenomena, while in fact the events described in the story (transcribed below) occurred in an entirely different setting.

Pre-Katmai Stories

Three recorded stories told by Ignatius Kosbruk (son of George Kosbruk), the current acknowledged storyteller in

Perryville, illustrate the collapsing of the genres and of historical periods: *Piculi*, about a hunter who tempted fate, *Pugla'allria*, a "good" shaman who accepted Christianity at the end of his life, and *Macintine*, the "Russian king" who was killed in retribution for his meanness to Kodiak Alutiiqs.

Ignatius told me he had heard the third story from his father, George, but had learned the first two at trapping camps or at night over tea from "the old man," Wasco Sanook. Wasco's widow, Martha, described to me one setting in which Ignatius might have learned the stories. Each night many of the boys in the village used to gather at Wasco and Martha's house. Wasco would begin telling stories as the boys lounged on the floor and furniture. The storytelling continued well into the night, Martha going to bed long before Wasco had relinquished his audience. Finally, he would announce that he had no more stories to tell and the boys would go home. Wasco's house served as a sort of modern-day *qasgiq*, its main innovation being the fact that he was the only adult male instructor. Hence his own idiosyncratic view of Alutiiq folklore and history, unameliorated by the presence of other storytellers as would have occurred in the *qasgiq*, survived to the next generation.

Ignatius told me the stories while I was a houseguest in his and his wife Frieda's home. I sat across the

kitchen table from Ignatius, sipping tea while Frieda worked, listened, and occasionally commented from the cooking area.

Piculi

Ignatius identified the first story, *Piculi* (not the name of the man but a descriptor meaning "great hunter"), as an *unigkuaq* (cf. above, "myth"). The story is reproduced here in English translation, written with the assistance of Ignatius Kosbruk and Ralph Phillips. Portions originally told in English appear in italics. Ignatius switched to English when he felt it was especially important that I, with my very limited ability in Alutiiq, understand what was going on. He enjoys and is committed to the art of storytelling, subscribing to the proposition that a story cannot be told in the absence of an active audience. Only by speaking English could he be sure that his performance was complete and successful.

Ignatius's comment to Jeff Leer at the beginning of the story referred to his understanding that Leer, with whom he had worked in the past, would listen to the tape.

Piculi as told by Ignatius Kosbruk
March 30, 1992
Perryville, Alaska
English translation

There's another story, Jeff Leer. There used to live at Katmai an expert hunter. I don't know his name. He was a great hunter. *But I don't know his name. Anyway, this guy was a real good hunter and -- great hunter. He used to hunt year-round. Fill all his garages up for the winter, with whatever they had. I guess, I don't know how they were made, made out of grass or wood. He let his servants make him three big warehouses for winter. Dry up meat. All the meat he put away.*

So I think it must been in the fall. Finally he came back from his hunting. When he came back, they were putting up fish, he saw them down at the river. The Alutiiqs were putting up fish. There used to be lots of fish in the past.

Then he said to his wife, "My new shoes. I've never used them." He put them on and went for a walk. He put on clean clothes, and went to visit. He went to the village by way of the river.

While -- the sun was shining; it was fine weather and that man had on clean clothes; he went to the ones who were fishing at this river. While he was going along the road, he stepped on some fish -- *you know* -- they were exposed to the sun.

Then he splashed his shoes with the rotting fish. *Boy then he cursed.* He cursed about the fish, even though it hadn't done anything to him. He cursed God. For no reason, "Why did you send fish here?" *Because it just dirty his shoes when he stepped that fish, rotten fish. And he splash it on his new shoes. Boy, then he cursed God. He cursed God for no reason. And then he answer him from the air without nobody. Nobody around. And answered. The word came out from the air. All the people that were along the creek listened to it. Every one of 'em. And listened to him and stopped, and were --*

And then he said, God tells him himself, "I sent this food, fish, down so the kids wouldn't go hungry. I sent it down due to the people

that will go hungry, so they wouldn't go hungry."

And this guy, he answered him right back and told him, even if he doesn't eat any fish, *he will make it through the winter.*

And then God gave him the best of luck. All the game he wanted -- came. And he dried all the meat he can, and put away three big warehouses, just full of dried meat. He went out and God gave him all the luck he wanted. He didn't punish him. But at the end he was punished.

And then he -- he filled all his warehouses full. When time to quit, then he quit. And then winter came. Winter came. Oh, I don't know how big those warehouses were!

Then it became fall, it was snowing and cold, and he quit hunting. These caches were full to the top.

Then he must have had a wife. He said to his wife, I don't know how many times, to open that first warehouse. He sent his wife *to open that first warehouse. She opened it as she was advised to from her husband. She opened it but nothing but sod. All the meat: All dirt! And then he send her to the other one. Same thing: It was all sod. All that work he did. And then the third one, it was same thing: Nothing happened. No meat, all dirt. That's when God punish him.*

And then she ate in the table with him, tried to feed him, and couldn't. She feed him out of her own plate and put it in his mouth and it turn into mud. And everything what he tried to put in his mouth turned into mud. He died from starvation.

He hollered. Three times he answer him. God told him that he sent the fish down so the children wouldn't go hungry, that's why he sent the fish to the earth.

Then that one answered him, "Even if I don't eat fish I will survive the winter." *He died from starvation.*

That's why they always tell us not to step on the fish, when we're around the creek. Because it is just like bread -- bread and butter. That's what they call it, how big the fish is. That's the meaning of it.

That's all.

The story melds a common Eskimo theme with a Christian message, illustrating how completely Alutiiq and Christian values have been combined. The traditional Native Alaskan motif, mockery or disrespect of a valuable food resource (Thompson 1975, Motif # C94.3, C 934, Q288), is widespread throughout Alaska (e.g., McClellan 1970, Johnson 1975). It involves a person who is inconvenienced or upset by the resource and curses or mocks it. In this case, drying salmon, exposed too long to the sun, has rotted and splashed on the man's new shoes. Later, retribution is exacted for this thoughtless and disrespectful act. In *Piculi*, the man is punished by God Himself in a manner reminiscent of the European Midas punishment (Thompson 1975, Motif # D476.2), a motif not reported in other examples of North American folklore (cf. Thompson 1966:362). The story's messages are several: treat the resource with respect or it may be denied you (a common Eskimo theme), avoid the sins of pride and love of material objects (both an Eskimo and a Christian theme), be a sharing member of society (again, teachings of both traditions, though more commonly practiced in Eskimo society), and do not blaspheme God (a Christian commandment). Taken together, the messages represent solid contemporary Alutiiq values.

Ignatius often used the image of bread to describe how important subsistence foods are to the Alutiiqs. It is a

symbol with several dimensions. First, bread is religiously important to the Russian Orthodox Alutiiqs. It is the staff of life and the Body of Christ, a metaphor familiar to all from biblical stories and church sacraments. Second, bread has become a staple in Alutiiq households. Virtually all women bake their own bread, taking pride in serving it to appreciative *Milik'aanaq* visitors along with homemade jam and smoked salmon. Ignatius's use of this symbol provides a further example of the syncretic nature of contemporary Alutiiq life.

Pugla'allria

The second story is about Pugla'allria, a shaman who was said to have lived during the last days of Katmai.[66] Ignatius also termed this story an *unigkuaq*. He explained

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[66]Ignatius used the term *kallagalek*, which he glossed as "shaman," to describe Pugla'allria. French scholar Alphonse Pinart, who traveled in Alaska in 1871 and 1872, referred to two types of Alutiiq spiritual practitioners: the "*kahlalik*" (which Leer transliterates as *kalla'alek*), or shaman, and the more highly regarded *kachak* (in modern Alutiiq orthography, *kas'aq*), who had a personal relationship with *llam sua* (the personification of the universe), could foretell the future, and knew the religious rules of the society:

> *kachak*, un homme supposé avoir des relations avec les *hlam-choua* [personification of the universe] et connaître l'avenir; il était en même temps le dépositaire des traditions et de la foi religieuses [sic] de ces populations; ils étaient . . . tres-révérés et placés bien au-dessus du *kahlalik* (Pinart 1873:677).

that Pugla'allria had actually lived; he had been the hunting partner of Simeon Takak, the last chief of Katmai and first chief of Perryville.

The following English translation of Pugla'allria's story was written with the assistance of Ignatius Kosbruk, Ralph Phillips, and Jeff Leer. The parts originally told in English are in italics.

Pugla'allria as told by Ignatius Kosbruk
March 24, 1992
Perryville, Alaska
English translation

I used to hear this story in the past from that old man, *his name was Wasco Sanook. He used to tell me stories*. He used to tell me stories there in the trapping grounds, when we used to be there, trapping. Then, I didn't understand what he told me. He was really talking about a shaman. Then, when I thoroughly understood it, he made me tell that story back to him.

From Naknek to Katmai, a maternal uncle went down there to two old people. They had only one son -- one. Then that uncle made that son into a shaman -- but the uncle didn't tell the nephew's two parents anything.

When he was about to go home, he took that boy out, the one he had made into a shaman, and he put him into a garbage pit. *It was about in the fall, in September, I guess or October, whatever.* So he made him stay there the whole winter, through the entire winter, in the back of the pit. *We call it a garbage hole.* He was there the whole winter. Then when spring came, that uncle went down from Naknek to Katmai. Then he asked the two parents, "Where on earth is your son?" Then his mother got all excited, not having known where he was since the fall; she had lost him, her *boy*. Then that uncle told her to look for him out there in the garbage hole. *In the pit -- the garbage pit*. His mother did as she was told, she went down to that pit. Then

she saw him there in the pit, in the process of leisurely cleaning his teeth, taking fish eggs out from his teeth. She took him down to his father, to his dad.

Now that boy knew every last thing in the world. He knew what was on everyone's minds. He knew how people would live in the future. He was a person who knew things. Now that uncle was just beginning to make him a shaman.

From then on, being a shaman, he didn't hurt his fellow humans, he just helped his fellow humans. He became a shaman. People in those villages didn't know what kind of person he was. That Pugla'allria, *he knows everything what was going on.* He only killed his uncle. He killed him because of the fact that he had made his parents cry. *The only person he killed, that was the only one.* When he was just leaving, when that uncle got ready to go home again, Pugla'allria tied a hair around his neck. That uncle didn't know it, *he didn't know he tied a hair around his neck. He didn't know. So he went back, back to Naknek, and that same year, one year after that, he went back. He went back to Naknek, and looked at him. He was almost cut by the hair what he put around his neck.* As a shaman, the only person he killed was his uncle. On the way, he helped people out.

Then again one time when people were hunting for sea otters in the sea, when they were way out in qayaqs, in 3-man baidarkas, there were lots of them hunting sea otters. The wind came up, it blew really hard, and they had absolutely nowhere to go. Then that Pugla'allria, he called those who were hunting sea otters, *the ones that went out for sea otters. And all a sudden* suddenly all the qayaqs went towards each other, they gathered without anyone doing anything. *Nobody touched them.*

They were out in the storm. They didn't know. And they all gathered in one place and made a path for them to go up to -- back to Katmai.

There was no human agent -- *nobody touch them and they didn't know what happened. They all go through that one path -- right up to Qa'irwik* [Katmai], *right where they live. And when they landed, Father,* Apawak [the Russian priest told him not to do that any more].

Then he, that shaman, lived among the people. He was kind and nice to the people. He only helped those people. He used that magic.

Now, once, unexpectedly, this couple's child got a fish bone stuck in his throat -- in the village -- a bone got stuck in his throat . His parents asked shamans to come help. That Pugla'allria watched all those shamans from somewhere or other, *in their home. They couldn't do nothing to him. And Pugla'allria was watching them from his home -- and wondering what kind of kallagalek are they.*

At last, finally they think of him. They call Pugla'allria down. And he went out. And when he entered the house he told them, "What are you shamans good for anyway? You just torture people in their minds, you're just killing people instead of helping. Is this child suffering here? You can't seem to help him." *So he just take the child and put him on his lap. I don't know what he did. And he take the bone out and show it to them kallagaleks every one of them.* "Was this hard?" *He take the bone out and show it to them -- every one of em.* Then he told them to look, that "A person who pays attention to himself can be a shaman. He helps people, doesn't do anything bad to them." *And they said some of 'em were real criminal, in that group. He seen them, their mind.*

And then after that then the shaman lived there helping people.

This chief there, *the one I told you about, the chief, he never hire nobody, only Pugla'allria for partner. He say he never carry no gun. And fall of the year when they watch for bears at night, he let the bear come right close to them, up to them right there. He had no gun. That's something amazing. He never let the bear see him.*

Then he used his shamanism as a means of helping people out. He helped people out with his shamanism. Then he lived and just helped people.

Then once he started to ponder, "Am I doing the right thing?" Then, then when he started to think about it, he started to think he wanted to quit it, what he was doing, being a shaman. Then he started to become sick. He was sick then. Then one time, once, all of a sudden his shaman helpers came back to him. They broke his joints. *Arms and legs were broken up without nobody*

touching 'em . And he hollered, "Whoa! I wouldn't come with you guys!" And his arms and legs started to break up without nobody touching them.

And he hollered, "I wouldn't come with you guys, because I think that we are doing something that is wrong." He screamed that it wasn't right. *"It's not right. It's all devil's work." And it got worse and worse and worse. His legs start to break without nobody touching them.* Then it got worse and worse. *His arms and legs start to break without nobody touching them.* Then he screamed, saying he will not go with his spirit helpers, they're not doing right. He said he would follow only the true God.

Then the poor thing died. He just vomited blood until Good Friday. I heard this, that the poor creature died on Good Friday, vomiting blood.

That's the end, it's all done.

Pugla'allria experienced a conventional initiation into shamanhood through the agency of his maternal uncle, also a shaman. At the end of a year in a stink-head pit, he emerged a clairvoyant, healer, and controller of weather. In telling the story, Ignatius makes a point of noting that each of Pugla'allria's deeds was for the good of the people. Thus Pugla'allria, unlike other shamans of his day, did not use his powers for his own benefit or to harm people (with the exception of killing his uncle, justified on the grounds that the latter had "made his parents cry"). Yet despite Pugla'allria's stellar career and good motives, when he was on his deathbed he realized that shamanism was essentially evil, that his spirit helpers were agents of the devil. He threw them off, dying

in excruciating pain. As with Yup'ik shamans, the locus of his spiritual power was in his joints, which burst open when he expelled his helpers. He died on Good Friday, but not before he was able to accept the True God and Christ.

The story of Pugla'allria, like that of the *piculi*, is a statement of contemporary Alutiiq values, particularly as they apply to religion and world view. This story demonstrates that shamanism was not entirely bad; when the practice conformed to the Christian exhortation to help others, it was beneficial to the people.[67] But this story also shows shamanism as a powerful office regardless of the motives of its practitioners (cf. also Birket Smith 1953:129, 220-23 re. "good" and "bad" shamans among the Chugach Eskimos). There is no question that Pugla'allria had powerful abilities. Interestingly, the less benevolent shamans are portrayed as less successful in performing good deeds, but they had no trouble performing feats for their own benefit. The story thus shows that Christianity did not dissolve the beliefs that existed in pre-contact days.

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[67]Not all Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs agree with this characterization of shamanism. Several people became uncomfortable when I introduced the topic, disclaiming any knowledge of *kallagaleks*. They stated that the practice was the devil's work. The region's current priest, Father Maxim Isaac, does not share this view. He is a Yup'ik who has great respect for the healing ability of the shamans of the past. He recounted to me his father's recovery from an accident made with the invaluable assistance of the local shaman. Father Max's attitude toward shamanism may have facilitated the discussions of the topic which I was privileged to witness.

Instead, through a syncretic process, it incorporated and eventually overpowered them (cf. Burch 1971:160-62).[68]

Through this story Ignatius reveals that he believes both Alutiiq and Russian supernatural systems to have been powerful, but Christianity, through its emphasis on good works, to be preferable. Even today the powers and methods of the two religious systems are seen to be analogous by virtually all Alutiiq elders (although I am unsure of the extent of this belief among the middle-aged and younger). I was told of innumerable incidents when holy water, a cross, a prayer, church bells, or consecrated ground saved people or structures from natural disaster, in precisely the way that Pugla'allria was able to calm the waters for the sea otter hunters.

Pugla'allria is thus a story about the victory of Christianity over shamanism.[69] As Ignatius tells it, the

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[68]Although people claim to know little about shamanism nowadays, the bone-breaking episode at the end of the story indicates that portions of the previous belief system are remembered. It is likely that the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, like the Yup'iks about whom we have more information, broke the bones of a shaman when he died to ensure that he would not come back to life (Mather, pers. comm. 1992; Fienup-Riordan 1990:54).

[69]*Pugla'allria* contains many interesting motifs, most of which are beyond the scope of this paper. For instance, shamanistic contests are common themes in Eskimo lore (Lantis 1953:156). Further, the story contains information about Alutiiq social structure: Davydov had noted in the early 19th century that among the Koniag Alutiiqs, heredity passed from [maternal] uncle to nephew, precisely as among the Tlingits (Davydov 1977:190). The story of *Pugla'allria* shows a similar hereditary system (though there is no indication that this was the only route by which a person

story symbolizes not just one shaman's conversion, but the conversion of all Katmai Alutiiqs. The shaman's death on Good Friday (a detail repeated twice by Frieda Kosbruk as Ignatius told the story) is significant in this regard. It invites comparisons between Pugla'allria's life and the life of Christ, reinforcing each as a model for future generations. Good Friday itself is shown to be spiritually powerful, an active force in Pugla'allria's conversion.[70]

At the same time, *Pugla'allria*, like *Piculi*, shows the syncretic mixture of Alutiiq and Russian Orthodox beliefs evident in pre-Katmai stories and illustrates the part the supernatural plays in the stories from that era. Finally, the stories show the variation in what Ignatius termed *unigkuat*. *Piculi* might have been a typical *unigkuaq* except for its Christian elements and the anachronistic reference to "new shoes," but the *Pugla'allria* story, as an account of a named and fairly recent person's deeds, would probably

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became a shaman). Golder (1903) reported the motif of the cruel uncle in Kodiak folklore (1903:90ff.), and Boas (1919) compared it with similar Northwest Coast stories (1919:796 ff. and 951ff.). Lantis (1938) saw the motif as an indication of close cultural contact between Koniag and Tlingit peoples (1938:128, 154).

[70]According to a Russian Orthodox folk belief, one who dies on Good Friday will go straight to heaven (Leer 1993, pers. comm.). For parallels elsewhere in Alaska, see Mousalimas (1992:240ff.) for a discussion of the relationship between shamanism and Christianity, particularly as exhibited among Kodiak and Prince William Sound Alutiiqs. See also Fienup-Riordan (1988) for a story of the death of a Yup'ik Christian during Holy Week.

have been termed a *quli'anguaq* following traditional genre distinctions.

Macintine

The story about the death of Macintine illustrates Alutiiq attitudes about the fur trade, provides a striking symbol of ethnic distinctiveness, exemplifies the merging of historical periods in pre-Katmai stories, and illustrates how ancient motifs have been reworked with modern situations and characters. The story is an account of the November 1, 1886 murder of the Alaska Commercial Company's Kodiak trader Benjamin G. McIntyre. Originally from Vermont, McIntyre was a member of a family with longterm involvement in the Alaska fur trade (Nickerson and Cox 1895:100-1). The murderer was never brought to trial; all accounts of the tragedy end with his enigmatic disappearance.

Ignatius told me that the story of Macintine belonged to Kodiak Alutiiqs, for Katmai hunters and trappers dealt not with McIntyre but with the trader at Katmai who sent the furs to Kodiak. Ignatius did not identify the tale by genre.

The English translation of the Alutiiq story that follows was written with the assistance of Ignatius Kosbruk

and Ralph Phillips. Again, portions originally told in English are italicized.

Macintine as told by Ignatius Kosbruk
March 24, 1992
Perryville, Alaska
English translation

I used to hear this one too, it belongs to Kodiak Alutiiqs *especially*. Macintine was the king here in Alaska. He tortured Alutiiqs, the ones that went sea otter hunting. He gave them for their sea otter catch only *one pound of tea*. He made them go out hunting, the Kodiak Alutiiqs, out to sea. He made fun of them. A little flour, a little sugar was all he gave them.

Now one time they made a plan from the Lower 48, from Seattle, before we bought Alaska. That boss owned *the whole Alaska*.

Well, they made a plan from down there: Someone would kill him. Their minds were made up, all the Alaskan Alutiiqs.

Then the one who would kill came from Seattle, from down there, the government from the Lower 48 sent him to Kodiak.

Kodiak was really full of gun powder. So [he went] to the place under the bluffs, where he [practiced] shooting.

Then that assassin got to Kodiak. He walked among the people, and they didn't see him. *He was invisible. He was some kind of man, I guess.* People touched him, not knowing it.

Then *that first day when he got into Kodiak, Macintine himself, he went to him and ask him, "Macintine, would you let me buy a cow today for lunch?" Macintine saying, "No, you got to pay a lot of money for a cow." Says, "You know it."*[71]

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[71]I did not understand this detail about the cow until I heard Spiridon Stepanoff's 1969 recording in which he explained that Macintine and his crew were slaughtering a cow for their dinner when the assassin asked for a share (see the Appendix).

Then that one said to Macintine, *"Today is your last day you will have supper in your table." Or tomorrow, whenever is a better time for him to be dead.*

Lots of those other people in the village were scared of him; they thought Macintine would kill all of them. They didn't think he [the assassin] would be able to kill Macintine.

The next day the assassin [was there], just as they were sitting at a big table just about to eat. That Macintine was *right on the end of the table, he was sitting with his, with his treasurer or whatever he was, second to him, he was sitting down eating. Getting ready to eat. And then he [the assassin] sneak up to the window and aimed at him. He was clear. With the shot. And his [Macintine's] partner was nearby him, and he aim at him and shot him right there -- stone dead. And his partner, he must have talked a little bit Native language. He hollered,* "Kina maani caligta [Who's fooling around here]!?!" *He was crawling around all over on the floor.* "Who's fooling around here!?!"

And then after that, soon as he killed him, he went over and blow that ship up, so nobody would know. He blowed it up. And then he wandered around. And about three days after that they heard it from Seattle. And they were gonna come up and bomb the Kodiak Island but Kodiak didn't put its flag up. That's the only -- the flag would have come up they would have blowed Kodiak up, but the people knew that they were gonna do a dirty trick like that. They didn't put their flag up for three days. The third day they went out.[72]

That was the end of it.

Like the Katmai story, *Macintine* was remembered and recorded differently by various parties (see the Appendix

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[72]I do not understand how the flag's not being raised prevented the bombing of Kodiak, even though I asked Ignatius to explain it. His answer was on the order, "because if they had put the flag up they would have bombed the city." Unfortunately I did not pursue the matter further.

for transcripts of five additional versions). At least four printed and two oral renditions of the story exist in addition to a short account of the murder in a book about prominent families in McIntyre's hometown of Randolph, Vermont (Nickerson and Cox 1895).[73] The first printed version was published in an 1887 travelogue by Heywood W. Seton-Karr, who had been a member of the *New York Times* Expedition to Alaska during the summer of 1886. Seton-Karr was dining with McIntyre when the manager was shot in the back of the head. The second is an unpublished account written by Ivan Petroff, who had been responsible for the 1880 United States census of Alaska. Petroff was deputy customs agent at Kodiak in 1886 (Pierce 1968:7) and was also a witness to McIntyre's death. His observations were incorporated into a chatty narrative intended for publication in a magazine under the *nom de plume* "Boris Lanin," a manuscript which is now in the Bancroft Library archives. The third printed account began as an oral tradition and was later incorporated in the memoirs of Wesley Frederick (Fred) Roscoe (1992), who was an infant when the murder occurred. He recounts the story as he remembers hearing it from his father, Wesley Ernest Roscoe,

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[73]I am grateful to Dr. Robert E. King of the Anchorage office of the Bureau of Land Management and Mr. Hugh H. McIntyre of Fayston, Vermont for bringing the Nickerson and Cox publication to my attention and for providing a McIntyre family perspective on the event.

Kodiak's recently arrived Baptist missionary and school teacher. The memoirs (Roscoe 1992) also include the final written account, a letter which W. E. Roscoe wrote shortly after the murder. The elder Roscoe was a witness to McIntyre's death, but not to the shooting itself. His letter was published in the December 9, 1886 edition of *The Weekly Humboldt Times*.

There is little chance that Ignatius's story is the result of his (or his father's) having read an account of the murder. Newspaper articles are easily ruled out, for the only newspaper in existence in Alaska in 1886 was the *Alaskan* in Sitka. Due to the foreman's illness, the paper was not published for half of November and all of December, 1886. The only mention of the murder occurred in the January 8, 1887 edition:

> Murders still take place in the various outlying portions of the territory and, as yet, no means of transport have been afforded to the civil government officials. This is greatly to be regretted, as the only means of communication is still by the monthly steamer and even she does not touch at all ports or settlements. The assassination of Mr. McIntyre is a very unfortunate affair, and it is to be sincerely hoped that the murderer will be brought to justice (*Alaskan* 1887).

Both Seton-Karr's (1887) book and W. E. Roscoe's (1886) newspaper letter may have been available in Alaska after 1887, but until the 1920s they would have been

inaccessible to Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs because they were in English. Neither of the other two authors could have been a source for Ignatius Kosbruk; Petroff's account was never published, and Fred Roscoe's was first published in 1992.

There is a good chance that George Kosbruk had learned the story from a locally renowned "Russian" (Creole) named Spiridon Stepanoff. Spiridon explained in a taped interview (1969) that he had been born in the tiny village of Eagle Harbor on Kodiak Island in 1883, and at the age of 12 had moved to Mitrofania with his family. He had spent the rest of his life in the Mitrofania and Chignik areas with occasional trips to Unalaska, Unga, and Port Moller to work for canneries. Countless people told me of Spiridon's storytelling talents. Luckily, he had agreed to sit down with Bill and Doris Lind and the Chignik Lake teachers one day in 1969. They had recorded the session and in 1992 sent a copy of the tape to the Linds. Spiridon spoke both English and Alutiiq in what Bill described as a "Russian accent." One of the stories on his tape was the tale of the death of Macintine (transcribed in the Appendix).

If my assumption that Ignatius learned the story (directly or indirectly through his father) from Spiridon Stepanoff is correct, it has undergone an interesting transformation through the years. Whereas Spiridon maintained narrative distance from the characters and

action of the story, Ignatius identified closely with the Alutiiq hunters and the assassin in turn.

Spiridon maintained distance from the assassin in two ways. First, he reminded his audience that the murderer was a Russian (not an Alutiiq or Creole) from "outside" (i.e., from the Lower 48). Second, the man was a lazy good-for-nothing: "He wouldn't do nothing!" Spiridon implied that it was only natural that Macintine denied him his request for part of the slaughtered cow:

> So this fella he come up too. "Won't you give me a little piece for my supper?" Macintine says, "Ah! You! You're not my man. You're not a working man. You don't do nothing! You don't get nothing from me! You get home!"

Spiridon recognized that Macintine also suffered from moral weakness. At the beginning of his narrative, Spiridon implied that Macintine may have been partly responsible for the death of an Orthodox bishop he resented because he would not allow the Alutiiqs to hunt on Russian Orthodox holidays.[74] Furthermore, the gunpowder Macintine

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[74]The bishop in question is undoubtedly Bishop Nestor, who died in 1882 during McIntyre's tenure at Kodiak while on a visit to the west coast of Alaska (on the Alaska Commercial Company ship *Saint Paul*, not the *Kodiak* as in Spiridon's story; cf. Portelli 1991:20-1 for a discussion of chronological shifts in oral narrative). Almost a century later the *American Orthodox Messenger* described his death as follows:

> In 1882 he was in the far north, at Mikhailovsky Redoubt [St. Michael]. On the return trip to

sold the Russian stranger was no good, and it seems to have been partly in retaliation for that fact that he was killed.

More importantly, Spiridon had framed his entire narrative about the "Kodiak king" in terms of the fur trade of which his father had been a victim. When he launched into this story, Spiridon had just finished explaining that during the 19th century Mitrofania had been the site of a major sea otter hunt. The teacher had commented, "Yeah, used to make a lot of money?" and Spiridon had answered, "Yeah, not *people*! *People* for nothing! But they say company made a lot of money. They could get two thousand dollars for the skin, they pay sixty dollars."

Spiridon's perspective is most like that of neither the assassin nor the furbuyers in the story, but rather the Alutiiq onlookers. Seton-Karr, Petroff, and Roscoe make much of the fact that the local Natives and Creoles were

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> San Francisco, Bishop Nestor unexpectedly disappeared. Apparently he was washed completely overboard off the little steamship on which he was traveling. After some time, Aleut fishermen from Michailovsky Redoubt found Bishop Nestor's cassocked body. Over him circled a seagull. The body was taken to Unalaska for burial (AOM 1972:113).

To my knowledge, there was no suspicion of foul play at the time of Bishop Nestor's death. Spiridon's motif of discord between the economic activity of hunting and the religious observance of holidays also comes up in the memoirs of Fred Roscoe (1992:50-51).

afraid to chase the murderer and so did nothing to apprehend him. Spiridon Stepanoff showed the locals not as fearful but as clever opportunists who were able to benefit from a drama which did not directly affect them by feeding unhelpful information to the American "bosses" for money:

> And there was [unclear] right on the post, "Anybody seen somebody walking strange places, and you get $10." . . . Lots of people made the money for nothing. Once in a while they'd say, "There he is, up there! See the man up on the hill!" One of the bosses would go, go find him, they find nothing. Never find him, all over the Kodiak and they're climbing mountains, look for that man. Never find him. Never find him.

In Ignatius's hands the *Macintine* story carries on Spiridon's message about economic exploitation and further recasts the story as part of an Alutiiq self-definition. It has been converted from an anecdote about the murder of a particular individual to a narrative about the destruction of a symbolic social *persona*. In depicting the Russian Macintine as greedy, selfish, and despotic, Ignatius showed a man in direct conflict with the Alutiiq values of sharing and downplaying good fortune or superior ability. Macintine is similar to the rich men in many Eskimo *qulirat*, but as an outsider to the culture he does not understand that according to Alutiiq mores he must willingly give away some of his goods. Instead he demands a large payment for them. There is no way to correct the

imbalance brought on by his greed and arrogance other than murder. Ignatius's account thus harkens back to traditional Eskimo tales of redistribution of wealth (cf. Lantis 1953:164, Norton 1986:79ff.).

Further, Ignatius inserted an element of the supernatural which was missing from Spiridon's testimony. Ignatius said the murderer was "*invisible. He was some kind of man, I guess.* People touched him, not knowing it." Like Pugla'allria, this man used his powers for the good of the people, and so was justified, even in murder.

Ignatius's portrayal of Macintine's assassin fits into the "outlaw hero" type, a "people's champion who espouses a type of higher law by defying the established 'system' of his times" (Meyer 1980:94). Ives (1988) chronicled the story of another outlaw hero, George Magoon, noting the social and economic factors that made him especially attractive to a segment of Maine society in the context of changing game laws. In the Macintine story a similar characterization allows Ignatius to "[shape] the past into narrative that made inevitable changes more bearable" (Ives 1988:3). Specifically, Macintine's assassin avenged the economic exploitation which Alutiiqs had experienced throughout the 19th century.

Meyer's (1980) discussion of the worldwide popularity of outlaw heroes would appear to apply to the *Macintine* story. He suggests,

> outlaw heroes generally arise in a time and locale of economic and social crisis and become symbolic champions of one segment of this highly particularized society (Meyer 1980:116).

Ives reminds us that while some of an outlaw heroes' actions may be applauded, the heroes themselves are not necessarily approved of by the storyteller or audience. Their escapades provide a means to air a sensitive subject without forcing anyone to take an explicitly illegal stand (Ives 1988:295-6). In this case, the fact that Macintine's murderer is an outsider allows for a measure of distance between his actions and the storyteller's morality. It is obvious to Ignatius's audience that he approves of the assassination, but it does not follow that he would approve of a person he knew doing such a thing.

The *Macintine* story as Ignatius told it illustrates my contention that contemporary Alutiiq storytellers no longer distinguish between *unigkuat* and *guli'anguat* and that the two genres have collapsed to include all pre-Katmai narratives. Ignatius's narrative ignores the distinction between the precontact, Russian and American periods. It shares motifs and messages with traditional *unigkuat*. For instance, this is a story about the restoration of social balance and order which had been upset by the despotic deeds of a rich man. The task was accomplished, as in many Yup'ik *gulirat*, by an unnamed hero whose social position

was marginal (cf. Lantis 1953:114, 158). On the other hand, the *Macintine* story demonstrates a format and character treatment more appropriate to *quli'anguat*. For instance, instead of a maltreated orphan living with a spiritually powerful grandmother, the hero is an itinerate adventurer with no known home and, similarly, a great deal of spiritual power. The assassin's arrival from "Seattle" to save the oppressed people is more reminiscent of the story of Christ than of an Eskimo orphan. Furthermore, the murdered man is considered an historical personage who was murdered during a recognizable historical period (the "Russian" days), a characteristic associated with *quli'anguat*.

In telling this story, Ignatius not only illustrates the sharp dividing line Alutiiqs feel existed between themselves and traders and by extension all rich white people, but also contributes to the contemporary maintenance of that line. In this story Alutiiqs are victorious over a Russian and, by extension, over all white men. The deciding factor in the victory is the spiritual and moral superiority of Alutiiqs over Russians.

Today the line dividing the Native from the white worlds, like the story, is symbolic. In many instances it is not invoked, because today's economic reality is vastly more complicated than during sea mammal hunting days. For instance, a number of Alutiiq peninsula residents now own

fishing boats and airplanes, travel extensively, and have winter houses in Anchorage. In addition, some positions of authority and power are now held by Alaska Natives, from village and regional corporation officers to state senators, representatives, and bureaucrats. Nonetheless, ethnic and racial differences are still seen to play a crucial role in Alutiiq lives. The story of Macintine is one in a line of stories about white men that deal with those differences.

The written versions of the death of McIntyre display very different attitudes about Natives, Creoles, Russians, and Americans. For instance, all printed documents (and Spiridon Stepanoff's oral testimony as well) declare that the murderer, Peter Anderson, was a Russian.[75] This fact accounts for some assumptions by the American raconteurs about his character, for relationships between the recently arrived Americans and the Russians who had remained in Alaska after its sale were strained at best. Baptist missionaries like Ernest and Ida Roscoe resented the Russian Orthodox priests who hampered their attempts to

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[75]"Anderson" is not, of course, a Russian name. Vladimir Stafeev, who was stationed at the Alaska Commercial Company's post at Tyonek at the time, received word of the murder and wrote in his diary that Anderson was a "Russian Finn" (Stafeev ms. [April 18, 1887]). Roscoe posits that the man's name was "Andresoff" in Russian (Roscoe 1992:6).

establish a mission and orphanage on Kodiak. In 1887 Ida wrote,

> The old priest . . . is very much displeased with the American school. He told some of the men that as soon as the children learn to read English they would leave the Greek church, so he does all he can to make them go to the Russian school which they started two days after E. commenced his. They even went so far as to send a man around to gather the children up in the morning, when they first commenced, but I think we will come out best in the end (Roscoe 1992:10).

Several years later another missionary, C. C. Currant, echoed the anxiety about the priests: "The Greek priest here is doing what he can to oppose. Pray God that he may not harm us" (Roscoe 1992:124). Following his 1899 survey of the fishing industry in southcentral and southwestern Alaska, Capt. Charles P. Elliott expressed similar sentiments:

> The Indians [sic] under the domination of the Russian church, and the personality of the priest in charge determines to a considerable extent the condition of the Indians. The priest at Kadiak preaches sedition against the United States, his influence being distinctly for evil (Elliott 1900:741).

The Orthodox priests' point of view was expressed in an 1898 article in the *American Orthodox Messenger* entitled "Short Historical Description of the Kodiak Parish":

> Only this year on Woody Island the Baptists, weaving a nest for impertinently taking Orthodox children, are building a prayer house, and, it seems, not so much for vagrants without pastors of the heterodox, as much as for the seduction and luring of Orthodox Aleuts (AOM 1898:266).

The strained atmosphere in Kodiak between Americans and Russians at the time of McIntyre's murder may have been a factor in the murder itself and was undoubtedly a factor in the way it was perceived and reported.

The younger Roscoe (1992) added a new twist to this tale of interethnic conflict. Writing in the mid-1900s, 50 years after the murder occurred, he depicted negative attitudes not toward Russians (who were no longer a threat to the Protestants in Alaska) but rather toward Natives. In Roscoe's account Peter Anderson is no longer a Russian. Instead, he is a dissolute white man living among the Alutiiqs. He "was a shiftless, irresponsible sort of person. He lived with his squaw by the Aleut village outside the town of Kodiak" (Roscoe 1992:6). Anderson had sunk to what Roscoe implies was the Natives' uncivilized level, and was immoral as well. The story has been restructured to depict not the rift between Russian and American but between whites and Natives.

In contrast to the oral traditions recounted by Ignatius Kosbruk and Spiridon Stepanoff, and as expected (given the social atmosphere at the time), all written

accounts show McIntyre to have been a reasonable, responsible manager who fulfilled his duties well and was cruelly cut down in the prime of an exemplary life. Seton-Karr (1887) and Petroff (n.d.), the two eye-witnesses, agree that McIntyre was competent. Petroff depicts him as so valuable that his vacation was delayed to deal with company matters no one else could handle. He is also shown as exceedingly generous, having assisted Anderson once (Roscoe 1992), twice (Seton-Karr 1887) or three times (Petroff n.d.) before finally refusing to outfit him again for trapping.

All local testimonies except Fred Roscoe's (1992) depict the murderer as an outsider who had recently arrived from the Lower 48. Spiridon Stepanoff and Ivan Petroff (n.d.) said the killer had come north in a sloop with black sails. Only Ignatius and Fred Roscoe suggested that he had some relationship with resident Alutiiqs and Ignatius alone implied that he was, if not a shaman, at least a person with considerable spiritual power. The historical survey from McIntyre's hometown of Randolph, Vermont made no claims about the murderer's background, only his mental state:

> On that day, the evening of his [McIntyre's] departure for home while entertaining his friends at dinner at his headquarters station on Kodiak Island, Alaska, an insane assassin, in revenge for some fancied wrong done him by the company, shot through the window, killing him

> instantly and wounding others at the table. The miscreant perished from cold and hunger in the Kodiak mountains in attempting to escape (Nickerson and Cox 1895:101).

Taken together, the various Macintine/McIntyre renditions bring into contrast different ethnic strands. The versions are close in reported facts but far apart in interpretation. They illustrate Rosaldo's (1980) contention that oral sources should be looked at not (merely) as containers of facts, but as ways of organizing perceptions about the past (1980:97; cf. also Portelli 1991). All versions reassert and symbolize ethnic differences, both implicitly and explicitly.

Summary

The three stories reproduced here exhibit characteristics of both *unigkuat* and *quli'anguat*. Further, they describe a world in which Eskimo, Russian, and American elements blend smoothly to project a mythic pre-Katmai Alutiiq world view and to describe the image that today's Perryvillers have of that time.[76] The various

[76]Ellanna (pers. comm. 1993) notes that the Nondalton Dena'ina similarly fail to distinguish between Russian and American times in their oral tradition. The point here is not that the Katmai eruption caused this "historical confusion," but that it provided a handy reference point against which cultural changes could be viewed, while acting as a catalyst for those changes.

cultural strands which historians and anthropologists delight in highlighting and separating are inexorably woven together in the stories -- and presumably in the minds as well -- of Perryville storyteller and audience.

The narratives considered here are also part of Alutiiq history. Combined with the story of the Katmai eruption, they illustrate that the essential separation between mythical time and modern time occurred not with Raven's machinations or the first glimmerings of human society as among Yup'iks, but when the catastrophic eruption of a mountain on the Alaska Peninsula buried all that was old. People were left to reconstruct their lives and to reinvent their culture.[77]

This point is illustrated in several ways. First, the pre-eruption period in Katmai is characterized as a paradise. Related, life then is seen to have been substantially different from modern times. It was a time when God spoke directly to people, when a shaman-in-the-making spent an entire year in a pit before emerging in his full spiritual strength, when only a spiritually powerful

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[77]We should keep in mind that folklore, like ethnicity, is situational. Stories are told at certain times to certain audiences to make certain points. Perryvillers frequently refer to discontinuities between the old and new life. However, in some circumstances they *do* accentuate continuities rather than breaks with the old days.

stranger was capable of vanquishing the evils of the "Russian" economic system.

Second, as discussed in the previous chapter, the structure and content of the eruption story mimic mythic origin stories.

Third, with the passing of survivors of the Katmai disaster, its story has become part of the villagers' communal oral tradition and therefore far more significant than any account of individuals' experiences.

Finally, Katmai has become an imaginary place for today's Alutiiqs, none of whom has seen it. Although Ignatius and others set pre-Katmai stories in a named location (a characteristic of *quli'anguat*), they have no visual referent for that location. "Katmai" has become a purely symbolic place, similar to the generalized locales in *unigkuat*.

The fact that Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs no longer distinguish between *unigkuat* and *quli'anguat* is thus not merely an artifact of translation difficulties but also derives from the conception of history that the stories illustrate. All "old" stories are seen to be essentially alike, parts of the same genre, having taken place during a homogeneous epoch. A study of contemporary oral tradition suggests that the primary discontinuity in Alutiiq folklore coincides with the major historic break between the pre- and post-Katmai eras.

In summary, the three pre-Katmai stories recounted here are made up of motifs, content and treatment of time and place in a manner similar to *unigkuat*. They are about human beings and their interactions with the supernatural, as are many *quli'anguat*. The Katmai story contains "information about decisive, creative events in the beginning of time," and all the stories function as models which "are incorporated and integrated into a coherent view of the world" (Honko's definition of myth; 1984:50-1), as are *unigkuat*.

And, like all stories told by a living storyteller to a living audience, their meaning and message are directed and contemporary, part of the definition of what it meant to be an Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq in 1992.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTMAS IN CHIGNIK LAKE

Just as the people of Perryville have the Katmai story as their symbol of unity and uniqueness, so the people of Chignik Lake are known for their starring and masking festivities. Whereas the Katmai story allows storyteller and audience to relive the ordeal of the eruption and to experience vicariously the sense of *communitas* with the original participants, starring and masking are annual occasions which themselves re-establish *communitas*. In this chapter I look at these celebrations as community-wide ritual festivals which contribute to village solidarity on the one hand yet reinforce social distinctions on the other. I analyze their imbedded symbols as Turner (1967) suggested and consider how those symbols form a part of an Alutiiq identity configuration.

History and Description of Starring

In the 16th century, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the old Julian calendar by which Europe had reckoned time, adding 13 days and inserting an extra day every 4 years. The Eastern Orthodox church had separated from Roman Catholicism five centuries earlier and so declined to adopt

the new calendar. As a result, the Russian Orthodox communities in Alaska now celebrate Christmas not on December 25 but on January 7 and New Year's not on January 1 but on January 14.

There are actually four different celebrations which take place during the two weeks between January 6 and January 19 each year. The first is the *Slaawiq* (from the Russian *n., slava; v., slavit'*, praise or glory) activity of starring, which takes its English name from large many-pointed stars which are carried in front of a procession of singers. In Chignik Lake the stars usually go out on three consecutive nights beginning on January 7, ideally singing and feasting at each house in the village each night.[78] In Perryville, I was told, Ignatius Kosbruk is followed by a small group of singers as he carries the star around only on Christmas night itself.

The custom of starring is firmly imbedded in Alaskan Orthodox communities but is not practiced universally as part of the Orthodox Christmas celebration.[79] It originated in the Ukraine during the 16th century among

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[78]I follow Chignik Lake usage in referring to the star as an entity that "sings and feasts." The noun "the star" can mean either the physical star which is carried from house to house, or the group of people which follows the star.

[79]Starring occurs in some form in almost every Alaska Native village which describes itself as Russian Orthodox. Faithful in the cities of Anchorage and Fairbanks also go starring to the homes of other church members by car.

church dissidents who objected to forced Latinization of the church, and it continued there into the mid-20th century (Oleksa 1992:188ff.; pers. comm. 1993). Starring was documented on the Alaska Peninsula as early as the late 19th century in the journal of Alaska Commercial Company trader Vladimir Stafeev (ms.). He reported that carolers from Severnovsky had journeyed to Douglas for Christmas in 1890. He also mentioned starring for four consecutive years between 1892 and 1895 (Stafeev ms. [January 1890, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895]). Many Chignik Lake elders recalled the days when starrers journeyed by dogsled across the peninsula from Ilnik, or when those staying at Chignik Lake trapping cabins traveled by boat downriver to Chignik Lagoon to star. In Perryville, when Simeon Takak (the first chief of the village after its founding) and Father Harry Kaiakokonok had been alive, starring was a major event in which all the people took part, and it continued for three nights as it does now in Chignik Lake.

Fienup-Riordan (1990) described starring as a celebration which has come to be identified in Orthodox Yup'ik villages with both the Russian Orthodox church and the Native culture itself. In some villages, the people consider Orthodoxy the traditional Native religion, particularly in distinction to the more recently arrived "American" Protestant or evangelical sects. Fienup-Riordan suggests that *Selaviq* (the Yup'ik spelling) derives its

cultural vigor from the fit between the Ukrainian tradition and earlier indigenous Yup'ik festivals (1990:94ff).

The second January celebration in Chignik Lake is masking or masquerading. In its present manifestation it appears to be a syncretic mixture of a precontact Alutiiq midwinter festival during which people wore "wooden masks adorned with eagle feathers" (English Bay 1980:58) and a Russian custom imported to Alaska in the 18th century. Today in Chignik Lake (and, reportedly, in Perryville as well), people dress in costumes and visit from house to house where they must be entertained by "good dancing music," preferably accordion and guitar tunes played live or on tape. Masking begins on January 10 and continues until the night of the 17th when a community-wide masking dance is held at the school.

The masking celebration is not as widespread as starring. Father Maxim Isaac told me that it was never done in his home village of Marshall on the Yukon River, and Father Michael Oleksa notes that it does not occur in Yup'ik villages at all (1992:189). On the other hand, the Russian Orthodox villages in Prince William Sound, the lower Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak and Afognak Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutians, and the Pribilof Islands mask, as do some Orthodox Dena'ina villages. Lt. John Campbell of the United States Army, stationed at Kodiak soon after the sale of Alaska, reported masquerading there

in both 1869 and 1870 (Huggins 1981:83, 102). Like starring, masking varies somewhat from village to village.

The third January celebration, which has largely atrophied in both Chignik Lake and Perryville, is New Year's. Stafeev described a New Year's celebration in Douglas in 1893 during which there were three characters in masquerade: a devil without horns dressed in a parka, the Old Year dressed in an old gut-skin *kamleika* (a waterproof parka used when hunting and traveling in kayaks), and the New Year dressed all in white with pale face, holding a lighted candle in his hand (ms. [Jan. 14, 1893]). Elders recall hearing stories of a similar celebration in Perryville years ago, wherein the New Year fought with the Old Year until the latter was thrown out a window. English Bay and Port Graham on the lower Kenai Peninsula still hold elaborate plays on *Nuu'ikuutaq* (New Year's Day) (English Bay 1980:60ff; 1981:5, 10). In Chignik Lake, the holiday is celebrated by a well-attended church service beginning at 11:30 p.m. on the 13th. When the service ends at midnight, men shoot off rifles, pistols, and fireworks. No one masks that night nor on any night when church is held.

The fourth holiday marks the end of the January round. It is the feast of the Theophany, a Russian Orthodox holiday in which water is blessed and holy water is taken to each household. It represents the commemoration of Christ's baptism in the River Jordan.

A Christmas Diary

Inouye (1990:358ff) has provided a useful description of intervillage variations in starring, masking, and New Year's celebrations. I spent parts of two Januarys in Chignik Lake during *Slaawiq* and also interviewed Perryvillers about their own festivities. The particular traditions in Chignik Lake are perhaps best described through a chronology of events as I witnessed them. Since the following "diary" is based on two years' observations, I use the present tense to indicate what I understand to be ongoing customs, while I switch to the past tense to describe specific events that occurred in a particular year.

December 25

American Christmas.[80] I was told that Christmas trees (usually plastic, since the only conifers growing in the region are a few hand-planted, carefully tended Sitka spruce) are up and decorated, and people exchange presents

[80]This brief description of American Christmas is based on reports from villagers and teachers; I have not been in Chignik Lake on December 25.

on American Christmas. Santa arrived in the village on a National Guard plane sometime earlier in the month.

January 6

Russian Christmas Eve. A church service, attended by over 50 people, is held at 6:30 p.m. Chignik Lake's resident priest, Father Max, was away on this date in both 1992 and 1993, so the church reader (a woman from the Pribilofs) and the choir conducted the services.

January 7

Christmas. Church begins at 10:00 a.m., is attended by about 30 people.

Each year on Christmas Mary Boskofsky hosts a feast for everyone in the village, including visitors and teachers. People drop by any time between about noon and 3:30 p.m., many calling ahead of time to see if there's already a crowd. Mary prepares dozens of dishes, including caribou soup, various kinds of *akutaq* (called "Eskimo ice cream," it is a mixture of fat and either sugar and berries or dried fish; the latter mixture is called *tamuuq akutaq*), dryfish, smoked salmon, fish pie, smelt, steamed rice, cakes, pies, jello, macaroni salad, etc. The kitchen table is set for eight. As each diner finishes eating, he or she

gets up from the table and takes the dirty dishes to the sink, where Mary washes. She calls another guest into the kitchen from the living room, where the overflow is sitting on the sofa or floor.

Another church service begins at 4:00 in the afternoon, attended by about 70 people, almost everyone in the village. Immediately following the service, five stars of various sizes ranging from two to four feet in diameter, are brought from the porch into the body of the church and blessed. Each is mounted on an axle and is held by a man or boy who spins it. In the middle of each star is an icon or picture of Mary and baby Jesus. The points are wrapped in Christmas paper and decorated with bows and tinsel.

The five star bearers stand on the perimeter of a large circle in the center of the church facing each other and the icon stand. The congregation stands behind them. All sing traditional starring songs, then split into two groups to follow the stars out into the village. The stars may be carried by "anyone who wants to," I was told, but both years the same young men carried the stars. Only one of the men was a church *starosta* (elder or church officer), but all are known to be responsible and respectful. An important criterion is stamina: the star carriers must be able to carry the star throughout three full nights of starring.

The first group of starrers follows the "big star," which consists of two large stars and one small one. This group is made up of adults and their very young children. The number of starrers varies, averaging about 30 for each star in 1993, with the most participation occurring on the last night and the least on the second.

The "little star," which consists of a large and a small star, is also followed by about 30, comprising virtually all the children, teenagers, and unmarried young adults from about 10 to 25 years of age.

Besides star holders, the big star, which I followed and with whom I sang each night, has several song leaders. Both years the primary leader was a young (30-ish) man, assisted by three or four singers of both sexes. It is the song leaders who determine the version and number of songs to be sung at each house. Doris Lind also followed the big star and served as its advisor, deciding, for instance, when it is time to quit starring for the night.

The star carriers, in consultation with Doris, decide the starring route. The goal is to visit and bless each of the 30-some inhabited houses in the village each night, but there is some flexibility. For instance, the non-Orthodox teachers' houses can be missed on the first two nights if time is running short. If all lights are out at a house when the star arrives there, it will also be skipped. On

the other hand, some houses whose owners are temporarily out of town may be starred at their request.[81]

Once the star arrives at a house, the host might quickly put in a telephone call to relatives in Anchorage, Pilot Point, Perryville, or Kodiak. She holds the phone high so the listener can hear the singing, and keeps it there until *"S prazdnikom!"* ("Happy holiday!") is shouted at the end. Meanwhile, the stars proceed to the corner-mounted icon. The candle suspended in front of the icon is lit, the stars, with the singers behind them, face the icon, and the Troparion (Nativity of Christ) is sung in Slavonic. One of the star carriers then recites the doxology, also in Slavonic. Between four and five additional songs are sung, some in Slavonic and others in Alutiiq. The singing ends with the song "Many Years"[82]

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[81]Jeff Leer (pers. comm. 1993) remarked that when he starred in Chignik Lake a decade ago the star visited an empty house, as it did during 1992 and 1993.

[82]This is a short song sung on all festival occasions celebrating people (as opposed to God). The words in Russian are *"Mnogaya leta,"* and in Alutiiq, *"Amlertut kiaget."* Both translate to "Many years." Four repetitions of the phrase complete a verse, and three verses are sung. In Chignik Lake, the song may be sung to any one of three different tunes. The Chignik Lake English version of the song is:

Many, many years
Many blessed years
Wishing you good cheers
Salvation
Many, many years
Many blessed years.

sung three times, often once in Russian, once in Alutiiq, and again in Russian. At the end of the song everyone shouts, "*S prazdnikom*!", the singers line up facing the hosts and their children, and kiss them in turn, each singer repeating "*S prazdnikom*" as he or she kisses each member of the household. Only then may the crowd eat or talk on the phone to the absent relative.

At some houses a large feast is set out, and people sit at the table or serve themselves buffet-style.[83] The star may settle in for an hour if the feast is especially large, if it is dinnertime, and if people seem disposed to sit and visit a while. These interludes are times for joking, practicing songs, catching up on the news, and reminiscing about past Christmases. No alcohol is served, and all smoking occurs outside. The amount of food varies from house to house; at some there may be nothing more than a bowl of hard candy from which the starrers help themselves on their way out the door following the star.

As midnight approaches the starrers begin to think of finishing up for the night. Although Doris maintains that we must finish by midnight, this rule is strictly enforced only on the last night of starring. During the first two nights, we occasionally continued until after 1:00 in the

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[83]Unlike Kasigluq *Selaviq* customs (Fienup-Riordan 1990:174ff), there is no rule here that men or elders should eat first.

morning, depending on how everyone felt and how close the star was to completing the village round. It is important to finish the night at an appropriate house, for the stars themselves are left at the last house visited, which will in turn be the first house starred the following night. The night's starring must therefore end at the home of a responsible parishioner who will take good care of the stars.

January 8

Starring is supposed to begin at 4:00 in the afternoon, but people straggle in gradually, so that it is not until 5:00 or later that the star leaves the first house. The crowd includes not just residents, but also out-of-town visitors and relatives, many of whom make a yearly pilgrimage to Chignik Lake for starring. In fact, new people arrive on planes every day from Russian Christmas Eve to the last night of starring to join in the singing.

The big feasts are held in different houses on the second night than during the first. In all, about seven or eight households host full-scale dinners over the course of the three-day event, and many other households offer sizable snacks like triangular salmon sandwiches, pieces of sheetcake, chocolate chip cookies, and a big bowl of punch.

In 1993 a new song was added to the repertoire at the suggestion of a relative visiting from Pilot Point. She had asked the one teacher who was following the star to xerox copies of "Silent Night" for the group. We singers added this paper to the song sheets we already had, which consisted of lyrics rendered in English-based "phonetic spelling" for the Slavonic and Alutiiq songs.

Inevitably, at one point during the three nights the big and little stars meet. In fact, the little star orchestrates the meeting by sending scouts out around the village to determine the route and timing of the big star's movements. The meeting takes place outside a house, since no house is large enough for both stars at once. The two stars cluster around their respective star carriers, face each other, and begin to sing -- as loudly as possible. The object is to outsing the other star, which the big star understands to mean loud and tuneful singing, while the little star concentrates on loudness alone. Usually only the Troparion and "Many, Many Years" are sung. The little star invariably wins, and the two stars separate with much laughter and shouting.

January 9

The last day of starring, it is crucial that every house be visited before midnight when the entire community

meets at the graveyard outside the church. Starring begins between 2:00 and 3:30 p.m. In 1993 Father Max returned home for the last night of starring, so, laden with a new baby and his videotape camera, he joined the procession and pronounced the blessing at each house.

This third night of starring is special in several ways. First, the house in which "Young Gramma," Dora Andre, lived before her death in 1989 is starred. Those of her daughters who are present (one of whom flew in from Perryville, another from Pilot Point) receive the kisses and *"S prazdnikoms."* No food is served, for no one lives in the house now, but the star tarries a while for quiet reminiscence of Dora and the days when she used to hold the biggest feast of all.

Second, nearby at Harry Aleck's there is a commotion during the singing of the first song. The crowd, which is jammed into the tiny two-room house, is jostled by someone shoving his way toward the front. It is a "ghost," a sheet-covered boy crawling on the floor, thumping a big stick, as he is led to the front by a friend. This is the first of the *maskalatags*. He remains next to the star carriers, silent and motionless throughout the singing, then leaves during "Many Years." He returns at each house for the rest of the night.

Finally, because each house must be visited before midnight, those houses visited late in the evening (usually

the teachers' houses, since they are near the church) are starred for the minimum allowable time: The Troparion, doxology, and "Many, Many Years," followed by a shouted "*S prazdnikom!*" as starrers rush out the door, are sufficient.

Once at the church the bell is rung and all stand around Dora Andre's decorated grave holding candles and flashlights for a final singing of the starring songs followed by a short service conducted by Father Max. Then the congregation troops into the church for another brief service, and all disperse for the night.

January 10

Most out-of-town visitors leave for home the day after the last night of starring. In 1993, twelve Chignik Lake residents also left by charter plane to star in Pilot Point and Port Heiden at the request of residents of those villages, since starring is no longer performed in either place. January 10 is the first night of full-scale masking, which will continue until the 17th with a break on the 13th for the New Year's Eve church service.

Villagers explain that the *maskalataqs* represent Herod's men searching the village for Baby Jesus so they can kill him. Not only are there people dressed up like *maskalataqs*, but there are also "real *maskalataqs*" who might surreptitiously slip in with a group of people.

Several people refuse to go masking because they are afraid of being captured by these real *maskalataqs*, and, indeed, I heard parents tell their young children not to go outside or "they'll get you."

Maskalataqs can only communicate by whistling (and that only after New Year's), gesturing, and stomping their feet. Some might have a "translator" along in the person of an uncostumed young boy to whom messages are whispered. The *maskalataqs* are clothed so that it is impossible to tell who, or even what sex or age, anyone is. Padded sweatshirts, fishing pants and boots, one high heel shoe and one hunting boot, a dress or a curtain wrapped around the hips, gloves and mittens all conceal the identities of the dancers. Most make their masks out of old pillowcases, painting funny faces and cutting eye holes. Hats or wigs cover their heads. Only on the last night, when all *maskalataqs* unmasked, did I learn that they were adolescent boys and girls, one or two unmarried young men recently out of high school, and young to middle-aged women; there were no adult or married men among the maskers.

Despite the grim purpose of the historical figures they represent, *maskalataqs* are anticipated with enthusiasm and greeted with laughter. They travel in groups, usually between six and eight in a group. I noticed two groups of *maskalataqs* on one particular night. When they arrive at a house, the host must either play accordion or guitar or put

on a tape of accordion music so the maskers can dance. No one could tell me why *maskalataqs* like to dance; one theory is that it keeps their minds off the search for Jesus. Polkas, schottisches, and waltzes are favorite dance tunes, along with more modern songs like "Woolly Bully" and perennial favorites such as "Havah nagila." Once the music starts, the *maskalataqs* begin dancing with each other or with household members whom they drag onto the floor. They may bump and grind, pantomime collapse and artifical respiration, twist, or slide between each other's legs. There are several songs which they demand, such as the "Stomping Song," wherein they pound on the floor with all their might, and the "Masking Song" which gets faster and faster with each repeated verse.

Maskalataqs are not fed, though occasionally they beg for water and step outside to drink it and air their costumes. In Chignik Lake they visit only those houses where they know they'll be well received and where they'll be treated to good music. People from other houses therefore pay visits to the houses where masking is anticipated. The audience may consist of between 5 and 15 per household, both children and adults.

It is unclear to me to what extent these gatherings are considered public, though on balance the evidence suggests that there is an element of exclusivity to the performances in private homes. In 1992 I attempted to

invite myself to one house which I was told was visited by *maskalatagq* and was greeted with embarrassed silence. Later that night a group of *maskalatagq*, all young boys (including the son of the house I had attempted to visit), came to my cabin to dance because they "heard [I was] interested." In 1993 a child of the same household came to my cabin specifically to invite me to his house that evening to watch the maskers. This pattern of attendance by invitation seems to be widespread; I was told that at other houses some people are invited explicitly, while others -- near neighbors -- drop in when they see the maskers arrive and leave when the *maskalatagq* leave.

January 12

In 1993, the starrers returned from their trip to Pilot Point and Port Heiden on this day. They reported that there had been four maskers at Port Heiden the previous night. One woman confided to me that it was only after she had gotten home to Chignik Lake that she realized that the maskers were part of her own starring party.

January 13

This is New Year's Eve, which in Chignik Lake is celebrated by a late-night church service attended by 60 or

70 people. At the end of the service everyone kisses everyone else, saying, *"S nowim godom!"* answered by *"S nowi chasty!"* ("New year, new luck!"). Suddenly loud shots are heard just outside the church as men shoot rifles and pistols into the air. Fireworks, shot from three different locations around the village, soon follow.

January 14

New Year's day. Church is held at 9:00 a.m., attended by about 35 people. Church attendance is boosted by the fact that this is Saint Basil's feast day, the namesday for several prominent Chignik Lake residents. Namesday parties are held during the day, masking continues at night.

January 17

This is the last night of masking, since tomorrow is the fast day for the Theophany (the manifestation of God in the Holy Trinity, the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan River). At 10:30 p.m. the whole village congregates at the school. A few chairs are pulled up for the elders, but most people sit on the floor around the perimeter of the lunch room. In one corner musicians sit with guitar and accordion. When the music starts a dozen or so *maskalataqs* file into the room and begin dancing, a repeat of the

performances carried out in private houses but on a larger scale. Prominent community members (for instance, the health aide, Doris Lind) are pulled out on the dance floor to do a polka or twist with the *maskalataqs*. The audience claps and shouts encouragement as the *maskalataqs* dance.

The celebration continues until just before midnight, when Doris shouts, "Line up!" The *maskalataqs* stand in a line facing the audience, who try to guess who the maskers are, one by one. When all are unmasked the audience claps, cheers, and compliments the maskers on their masterful performances.

It is crucial that the maskers remove their masks by midnight. I heard many stories of people who did not do so and then found that the masks were stuck to their faces forever. Furthermore, the masks and whistles must be burned or shoved under the ice on the lake, not left around for people or dogs to get into. They are spiritually powerful even when not in use.

The masqueraders must take a steam bath after masking on this night, as on all nights when they go masking.

January 18

This is the fast day of Theophany. There is a morning church service.

January 19

This is the feast day of Theophany. A long church service, attended by about 50 people, is held. It includes the blessing of the holy water. Refreshments are served afterward. Each household sends someone to the church with a jug to collect holy water, which will be poured into tumblers and placed on kitchen tables.

Meaning

Victor Turner (1967) called symbols "the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior" (1967:19). Symbols might be objects, activities, relationships, events, gestures, and spatial units. They are rich and complex, representing and evoking a multitude of meanings. Turner stressed the fact that because rituals are enacted not in a vacuum but within a social and cultural context, their imbedded symbols' meanings can only be uncovered through a three-level analysis which takes that context into account. Chignik Lake and Perryville residents explained starring and masking to me insofar as they understood them. Their explanations constitute Turner's first, or exegetical, level of meaning (Turner 1967:50).

Exegetical Explanations

I was told that the ritual symbols in starring and masking derive directly from Russian Orthodox dogma and liturgy. For instance, the *Slaawiq* stars represent the star of Bethlehem, the singers the Wise Men following the star, the icons the Christ child himself to whom the singing is directed. Starring at the graveyard is in accord with the Orthodox belief that the dead remain part of the church community. Doris Lind told me that each host was supposed to put grass under her table to represent the manger, but that no one in Chignik Lake does this. Feasts are offered, I was told, to keep the children interested, to give them a motivation to star -- in other words, to ensure that the event is attended by the entire community. In answer to an (admittedly leading) question, one woman agreed that the feasting at starring time was like a namesday party for Jesus.

Elders also consider the Alutiiq-language *Slaawiq* songs symbolically important, for they represent a continuation of tradition in spite of the social changes which have rendered the words meaningless to many young people. The younger singers know the Alutiiq songs only phonetically but sing them because the songs are an inseparable part of the *Slaawiq* celebration. The songs are also a conscious tribute to "Young Gramma," Dora Andre, who

taught them to three generations of Chignik Lake Alutiiqs and whose passing is mourned by the whole village. Further, the Alutiiq songs are evidence and validation of the fact that Christmas is an Alutiiq holiday -- not that it is exclusively theirs, but that it has had a long history among the Alaska Peninsula Natives.

While people believe that individual symbols derive from Russian Orthodoxy, they also see the holiday as a whole as a meaningful reenactment of an ancient and sacred event in the life of Christ. As such it is not crucial that all participants fully understand all its mysteries; more importantly, the ritual must be performed correctly. There are certain people who can be counted on to know the proper rules and customs surrounding starring, and most others are willing to defer to them.[84] Among those who were considered experts in the past were Spiridon Stepanoff, Dora Andre, and Father Harry Kaiakokonok. Their places have been taken to some extent by Doris Lind, Mary Boskofsky, and Ignatius Kosbruk. But of all the specialists, Father Maxim Isaac is considered the ultimate authority on starring, despite the fact that he is a Yup'ik from the Yukon River village of Marshall rather than an Alutiiq from Chignik Lake. He claims to be less

[84]There are parallels between this dependence on the knowledge of experts and a similar ceremonial expertise among the *"kasiat"* (*kas'at*) reported by Davydov in 1802 (1977:109; cf. also Pinart 1873a:675-76.).

knowledgeable about some local customs than are the elders, but because starring is considered a Christian activity, it is natural that he be considered the expert.

One of the major functions which people attribute to starring is its integration of the entire village population. This is achieved in several ways. First, everyone (including visitors) is expected, invited, and welcomed to take part in the starring. Second, every house in the village is starred, and if one has been inadvertently forgotten, the star will go back to it. Third, as mentioned above, the food offers an incentive for starring. Finally, room is always found for visitors at *Slaawiq*-time, for Chignik Lake is proud of its position as the *Slaawiq* center for the Alaska Peninsula.

The "little star," followed by school age children and adolescents, forms another part of the symbolism of *Slaawiq*. This star is regarded as an effective way to perpetuate the tradition. This is where children learn the songs and traditions. Equally importantly, older boys have a taste of adult responsibility as star carriers and song leaders.

In contrast with starring, people claim to know few of the meanings of the masking festivities. Four young boys told me that "it's something evil" -- the *maskalataqs*

represent Herod's men searching for baby boys.[85] These youths did not know why Herod's men wore masks, why they danced, nor why they could only communicate by whistling (except as a way of disguising their voices). They only knew that the masks were dangerous, for if they were not removed by midnight on the last night of starring they would adhere to the maskers' faces forever. One woman suggested that in Jesus's day the masks were donned by Herod's men when they could not find Jesus (perhaps to escape the wrath of Herod?). The "real *maskalataqs*" who sometimes join the human maskers were described to me as "little half-men" who must be avoided at all costs.

Operational Meanings

Turner's (1967) second, or operational level of analysis involves observing the emotional states and social relationships which accompany the use or enactment of the symbols -- in other words, placing "the ritual in its significant field setting" (1967:26-7). Turner found that participants' exegetical explanations generally revolve around accepted dogma and emphasize the harmonious and integrative functions of the ritual. However, pre-existing social tensions become apparent as the rituals are enacted.

[85]See also Vick (1983:91) for a similar explanation for the derivation of Kodiak-area masking.

In fact, the rituals sometimes provide a forum for those tensions.

Through operational analysis of the Chignik Lake January holidays, I noted two types of unstated meanings: parallels with precontact Alutiiq traditions and hints at the social differentiation which is both mirrored in and perpetuated by the celebrations.

The fact that people cannot explain many of masking's symbols is directly related, I believe, to its antecedents on the one hand among precontact ritual whose meanings have been forgotten, and on the other to more recently imported customs from Russia. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, many local people are intensely interested in the precontact Alutiiq religion, of which they believe there are no remnants. This attitude notwithstanding, I found residual elements from an earlier belief system in both the stories discussed in the previous chapter and in rituals performed (e.g., the treatment of a brown bear after a hunt). Unfortunately, there are no detailed descriptions of that early Alutiiq belief system and only sketchy information about precontact ritual practice. Therefore, as with narrative folklore, Yup'ik culture must serve as its model.

Fienup-Riordan (1990) has dealt with the relationship between *Selaviq* and traditional Yup'ik midwinter ceremonies, and has suggested that the customs comprising

the former have been adopted so readily because they resonate with the cosmology, yearly cycle, and many of the particular customs of the latter (i.e., the Bladder Festival, the Feast for the Dead, and the masked dances known as *Kelek*) (1990:118). Through the years, Yup'iks have emphasized *Selaviq* parallels with older traditions while disregarding, smoothing, or discarding divergent details.

An example of parallel customs in the Chignik Lake rituals is the "Stomping Dance" so popular at masking, which might have derived from "the action of stamping on the ground to send the spirits away after ceremonies" (Morrow 1984:118).[86] The masking ceremony itself is almost surely a combination of Russian and precontact Alutiiq custom (cf. English Bay 1980:58). I quote Morrow at length in her discussion of Yup'ik ceremonies and festivals based on information from Mather (1985). The first ceremony described below, *Qaariitaaq*, precedes and is a preparation for the midwinter Bladder Festival. The second, the masking festival known as *Kelek*, served as a setting for propitiation and thanksgiving to the spirits (*yuas*) of the animals which were needed for sustenance. Although the

[86]Equally plausibly, the dance may be a modern version of traditional Russian dances. See, for instance, Illustration 71 by Jirokichi, a Japanese drifter who spent the winter of 1842-43 in Sitka, where he observed a masquerade. The masqueraders are stomping on the floor, presumably as part of a dance (Plummer 1991).

stated purposes of these festivals seem unrelated to the masking at Chignik Lake, similarities in specific actions are apparent and probably point to a now forgotten relationship:

> During *Qaariitaaq*, one or two men led the children of their village from house to house, carrying bowls. . . . Coastal sources did not describe what the children wore; elsewhere, they were disguised and made strange noises, such as a ghostly humming (1984:119).
>
> It is possible that the *Qaariitaaq* participants were disguised as a protection against the spirit world. . . . It is said that those who did not disguise their faces with paint during *Qaariitaaq* would go underground [to the land of the dead] (1984:122).
>
> It is probably safe to conclude that *Qaariitaaq* and [a festival performed at about the same time] *Qengarpak* were ritually dangerous times, during which precautions had to be taken against entry into the spirit world (1984:123).
>
> During *Kelek*, the shaman's spirit helpers . . . and the *yua*'s of various natural resources, which the shaman could see and describe, were revealed in masks. . . . As well as expressing gratitude for past assistance, the people undoubtedly hoped that these guardians would be persuaded to aid them again in dangerous situations.
>
> . . . Another initiatory custom was the use of special masks . . . for "trying out" or practicing the dances. These were worn by youths learning the *Kelek* dances. . . .
>
> On an occasion set aside for this purpose, two men were sent out to gather several sleds full of wood for making masks. In preparation for *Kelek*, the masks were carved, but they were not yet decorated. After messengers were actually sent to invite the guests, the masks were painted and then carefully wrapped and put away

> until the dancing began, as if the masks were fully empowered only when they were painted.
>
> In addition to the practice masks mentioned above, some *Kelek* masks were intentionally grotesque or humorous . . . . A person might wear one of these behind his dancing cross-cousin to upstage him and make the observers laugh. The "practice" and humorous masks were not considered sacred and were simply required "to cover the face". One source commented that such masks did not have to be buried (or burned) after use: "masks that were like birds or fish, for example, were given to the boys and girls".
>
> Other masks used during *Kelek*, however, were fearsome and respected. . . . These masks were used only once, in the first dances performed during *Kelek*. . . . [T]he masks made ominous noises, whistled, and seemed to speak as they were struck lightly by one man (Morrow 1984:136-37).

In 1802 Davydov (1977) observed parts of midwinter celebrations in Kodiak during which performers wore masks, blew through whistles, and feared "devils" roaming around outside the *qasgiq* (1977:107-111). There are a number of similarities between Chignik Lake's contemporary masking activities, these Koniag practices, and the Yup'ik ceremonies described above. These include the midwinter setting, the centrality of painted masks, the practice of children visiting from house to house, dancing, the use of whistles,[87] fear of evil beings roaming about the village,

[87]Interestingly, English Bay people report that the *nantiinaq*, or "bigfoot," also communicates by whistling (English Bay 1981:20). See the following chapter's discussion of *a'ula'aqs* for comparable data for the Alaska Peninsula.

the participation of young people in "practice" dances, the potential spiritual danger which the celebrants face, and the use of humorous masks and actions. In addition, in Chignik Lake the used masks must be either burned or stuffed in a hole through the ice at the end of masking. Davydov (1977) had similarly reported that "[a]t the end of the festival . . . everything that went to adorn the participants is smashed and thrown into the forest" (1977:184). The current practice of destroying the masks may derive from an early Koniag practice analagous to the burning of spiritually powerful *Kelek* masks (and those used in other Yup'ik ceremonies as well) as described above. It is also reminiscent of returning the bladders of killed sea mammals to the sea in the midwinter Yup'ik ceremony *Nakaciuq* (cf. Morrow 1984:123). Or, a third possibility, it may relate to the Russian Orthodox Feast of the Theophany, wherein profane water is made sacred. The spiritual cleansing power of water was brought up in a conversation I had with Olga Kalmakoff and her son Joe of Ivanoff Bay:

> OK: And they would go twelve o'clock at night, they'd go jump in lakes and make themselves free from evil.
> PP: Who, the people?
> OK: The people.
> JK: The ones that were participating in the masquerade. I guess there was a traditional thing to wash themselves.

OK: Wash themselves clean.[88]

The fact that symbols attached to the Alutiiq parallels of *Qaariitaaq, Kelek, Nakaciuq* and the Russian Orthodox Theophany were either merged in one activity or are similar to each other in their associations with purification and cleanliness undoubtedly has contributed to the persistence of the custom of destroying the masks. In fact, it is likely that, just as pre-Katmai narratives have become collapsed into a single genre, so masking represents the collapsing of a number of precontact and contact-era rituals, each contributing in some way to its current configuration. In this process, some precontact ritual and symbolic meanings were not transferred to the modern forms. For instance, on the Alaska Peninsula, masking does not contain a component of thanksgiving and propitiation as did the Yup'ik masking ritual of *Kelek*. Assuming that a ceremony parallel to *Kelek* existed in precontact Alutiiq villages, these functions have been lost or transferred to other rituals.

Chignik Lake masking therefore serves as an example of the principle that form and social function may endure with

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[88]Leer (pers. comm. 1993) reports an interesting parallel among the Chugach Eskimo (Alutiiq) of Prince William Sound. They have a saying, *"Maskal'atalleq maqiluni, qaqimalleq nalugluni."* ("He who has masked takes a steambath; he who has played the devil takes a swim in the ocean" [cf. also Leer ms.]).

some of the original emotional impact without a necessary persistence of cultural meaning. Crocker (1982) suggested that masking rituals frequently persist in the absence of an understanding of their historical and spiritual antecedents:

> A masking tradition can survive even when its original symbolism and relation to social context have been completely lost. . . . Should we then conclude that such masked celebrations are empty charades or romantic anachronisms? Quite the contrary; I think that they demonstrate two things: the power of masked disguise in and of itself, and its vital importance to the social cummunity even in the absence of specific meaning (1982:80).

The syncretic nature of the Chignik Lake January ceremonies is further supported by the fact that the *Slaawiq* tradition as a whole is not fully in keeping with Orthodox church ceremony. Archpriest Nicholas Molodyko-Harris of the Anchorage parish maintains that "[the celebration of the coming of the Magi] is not emphasized in the Orthodox religion," yet its elaboration forms the primary metaphor for Alutiiq *Slaawiq* celebrations (pers. comm. 1993).

The second type of information the operational analysis yielded was an understanding of the social functions the rituals served. As noted above, the people see their main social function to be the integration of the whole community in a single, pleasant, and sacred activity.

As such, starring is eagerly anticipated the year round. When I visited Chignik Lake in October I was asked if I would be returning for starring. In Perryville in November I was asked the same question. People who have moved away from the village plan their vacations to coincide with Russian Christmas. One woman who had been raised in Chignik Lake and recently married a Navy officer from the Lower 48 chose *Slaawiq* as the occasion to take him home to meet her relatives.

Preparations for *Slaawiq* may be elaborate or simple, depending on one's position in the community. The most influential elders, those who have good hunters in the family, and the most active church members (i.e., choir members, readers, or *starostas*) hold the biggest feasts, which in turn require much advance preparation. Subsistence foods must be obtained ahead of time, stored, and then prepared. Store-bought items must be ordered well in advance, since the small village store generally runs out of popular items during the holidays.

Once the starring begins, universal enjoyment contributes to social solidarity. The participants enjoy having sung well, they enjoy the good food they receive, and they enjoy spending eight or nine hours together at a stretch. A strong camaraderie develops among the starrers. As the evening progresses, jokes flow more freely. Middle-aged women begin to whisper in jest about sneaking in empty

bags so they can take home some of the smoked salmon or chocolate cake from the homes of particularly good cooks. They may coat their lips with heavy red lipstick before kissing their hosts on the cheek. Songs about current village affairs are made up to be sung to starring song tunes.

Community tensions are not completely missing, however. During the starring itself there is little mean-spirited gossip, perhaps in part because representatives of almost every family are present. However, there are community members who will not star in particular people's houses because of a feud or disagreement. Those who feel they would not be welcome simply ease out of the group at some point during the night, going back home while the star continues on.

Status differences are also obvious in that some houses serve large feasts, while others serve only token snacks. A dialectical process ensures that the appropriate people hold the biggest feasts, for the stars tarry longest at the homes of the most respected elders and church officers. There is an obligation to provide food when the star is going to linger, while there is no point in doing so if the star is going to simply rush in and out of the house. At the same time, the star carriers know which houses are likely to serve large amounts of food ahead of time. First, word gets around that "So-and-so has been

cooking all day." Second, certain hosts *always* serve feasts.

Thus the established pattern of food serving -- based on the differential statuses of the hosts and on past practice -- is reinforced by the actions of the starrers, who eat or run at the direction of elders and star carriers. Furthermore, those households in which a large feast is prepared are complimented and the food discussed with approval, thereby contributing to continued recognition of high status.[89]

On the other hand, the star never snubs a host who unexpectedly serves a large meal. In this situation, I

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[89]People rarely brought up the topic of status while conversing with me, but I observed some factors which I believe contribute to relatively high status in the communities of Chignik Lake and Perryville. These include age (the older one is, the more respected one is), knowledge (one with a specialized fund of knowledge, such as traditional folklore or healing practices, is venerated), power with the outside world (this is situationally important, depending on whether interaction with outsiders is necessary at the moment or not), intelligence, generosity, past abilities (a man who had been a good hunter in his youth continues to carry the respect which would be accorded to a practicing hunter), and family (those with few or no children have few constituents and hence relatively low status in the community). There are observable differences in material wealth among villagers (e.g., size of fishing boat, ownership of an airplane, amount of air travel one does), but these were not topics of conversation to which I was privy. Most villagers' houses are similar, most people have working snowmobiles and hondas, and all people follow the same general lifestyle. Still, at Russian Christmas, material wealth, as measured especially in quantity of foodstuffs (which depends on having hunters in the family who contribute to the cache), is important for maintaining a reputation for generosity.

observed the star carriers confer among themselves and decide on an appropriately respectful length of time to stay. Because the night's starring route to some extent is planned in advance based on estimates of where food will be served, these surprises require some adjustment, invariably made with good grace.

Finally, social tensions arise in little ways throughout the three-day period. Younger adults might not cede a seat on the sofa to an unrelated elder. A honda driver might pretend not to notice that an older, unrelated person needs a ride to get to the next house. Jokes may be made about how much someone eats.

An investigation of the operational level of the masking ritual produces analyses which are somewhat different from the understandings people normally express. As mentioned above, the tone of masking is unsubdued fun for all participants. The audience may drink alcoholic beverages as they watch the *maskalataqs*. They clap, stomp their feet, yell, and encourage the dancers. The maskers themselves act as they would never ordinarily do. Two of the most uninhibited *maskalataq* dancers both in 1992 and 1993 were very quiet and devoted young mothers whose normal lives are taken up entirely with their families and who, under normal circumstances, I did not observe do anything to draw attention to themselves.

Like starring, masking has both exclusionary and integrative dimensions. From January 10 until the 16th, *maskalataqs* only visit selected homes. I was told that in the past "everyone" gathered at Doris and Bill Lind's old house because Bill was an accomplished musician. The couple was less involved in masking in 1992 and 1993 because of Bill's health problems. As a result, there is no longer a central location in the village for general participation in masking. Whether or not "everyone" did in fact gather at the Linds' in the past, today a portion of the population may miss seeing the *maskalataqs* until the night of the 17th. The social message of the first six nights of masking is therefore the special insider status of the few, while that of the last night is the promotion of village solidarity as the entire population convenes at the school for the finale.

At this stage in the analysis, starring and masking both appear as complex activities with a multitude of different meanings. Starring is a religious reenactment and a community-wide event with universal participation. It is a midwinter festival celebrating communal identity through the convergence of relatives from all over the country. Starring emphasizes the successful completion of a search for the Christ child and personal salvation, the birth of Christ, the blessing of individual homes, and communal eating of foods that have been harvested the

previous summer and fall. It is an occasion in which social status is made manifest and perpetuated.

Masking is also nominally a commemoration of a religious event, but has more in common with precontact midwinter rituals than with Russian Orthodoxy. Its carefree tone offers participants an unusual release from their normal social situations (cf. Turner 1969:172ff) and at this point in the analysis appears less concerned with social solidarity than with individual release.

Positional Meaning

Both starring and masking, and the New Year's celebration as well, should also be considered in conjunction with other Chignik Lake social and cultural practices as well as with the aggregate of local ritual symbols.

Turner (1967) suggested that this can be accomplished by investigating the symbols' "positional meanings," by which he meant the range of contexts within which those symbols are used in the community and the associations which they have with each other (1967:50). For instance, the January celebrations I witnessed seem to revolve around a number of symbols which also occur in other contexts. Turner would call these "dominant symbols," for they are evoked so often that they have become axiomatic of strongly

held values (1967:32). The symbols which I perceived to be most prevalent during the January celebrations fall into three categories: the complex of Christian symbols associated with the cross, icons, and the church; Native foods; and the Alutiiq language. I will discuss each in turn.

Christian Symbols. The fact that Christian symbols are prominent in starring signifies that to the Alutiiq participants this is truly a religious ritual. Starring begins in the church, journeys to each family's icons, and ends at the cemetery and church. Women wear prayer shawls, kerchiefs, or small lace head covers[90] throughout the three nights of starring, an indication that the entire procedure is considered part of a church service. In effect, the people take the church with them to each house.

This set of symbols is completely lacking in masking, despite the interpretation the people give it as the reenactment of Herod's pursuit of Jesus. I was told by several people that masking was associated with the devil, by which some meant with the precontact powers Christianity had overcome (i.e., both shamanism and the "little half-men" or "real *maskalatagq*") and others meant the biblical

[90]These caps or decorated hairclips, favored by younger women, are called *nacaruaqs*, literally, "like a *nacaq* (woman's cap)."

Devil in the form of Herod's men. Perhaps because of this association, masking is not undertaken on those evenings when church is held.

It appears that masking is seen as both unholy -- evil -- and nonreligious -- outside the realm of religion altogether. Its secular nature is suggested by several components which contrast with behavior considered appropriate for church and Holy days. First, drinking alcoholic beverages is allowed, whereas there was no visible drinking during the three nights of starring, or indeed (theoretically) during any church fast or feast day. Second, the music played during masking is the same as that played at community-wide and school dances. Third, audience members at a masking spectacle are not required to dress respectfully; they wear everyday clothing. Finally, the culminating masking celebration is held in the school rather than the church.

The New Year is a semi-religious,[91] semi-secular celebration which, judging from the nearly universal turnout at the church service, is important to the people of Chignik Lake. The service itself is only a half-hour long. People seem most interested in the fireworks that begin at midnight immediately afterward. At least three

[91]New Year's is not a major feast of the church (Ware 1991:304ff.), nor is a midnight New Year's eve service held in Orthodox churches in the Lower 48 (Black, pers. comm. 1992a).

different families regularly light fireworks visible from everywhere in the village. In 1992 people said they were disappointed with the display; the largest supply, on its way up from Canada in a fishing boat, had been confiscated at the border.

The use of guns to herald a new arrival has historical precedent in the area and was not confined to the New Year. In 1895 Father Tikhon Shalamov reported that as he arrived at Katmai, "we were, as usual, thunderously met by gun shots from the inhabitants of Katmai" (AOM 1896:57). Elders told me that this was the standard way of greeting the itinerant priest on his yearly visit, and was in fact common greeting method in many parts of Alaska.

Native Foods. The second dominant symbol I observed in Alutiiq ritual consists of Native foods (by which people mean those that have been obtained from the land or sea by the people themselves). All ritually important meals, from namesday parties[92] to *Slaawiq* feasts, by definition consist

[92]A namesday party is held on a person's saint's day. This is often close to the person's birthday as well, since a person's saint's day is the religious holiday closest to his dates of birth and baptism. However,the namesday party is not considered a birthday party. These celebrations involve large amounts of food prepared by the wife, daughter, or mother of the honored person. The entire village, including teachers, is invited for dinner at the person's house. People come in shifts, sitting down at the table to eat in turn as seats are vacated. The hostess has spent the entire morning and afternoon cooking and continues working during the party refilling glasses

mostly of Native foods. In fact, less than half of the dishes on the table may contain locally obtained fish, meat, or berries, and many ingredients in even those dishes may not be subsistence foods. These facts are irrelevant. What is important is that the feasts are perceived and defined as revolving around Native foods.[93]

These particular foods emphasize and in some cases reestablish bonds among those who share the feast. The foods have become an important symbol in part because their use is seen to be endangered. As was noted in Chapter III, many elders are upset that their grandchildren turn up their noses at seal oil and caribou organs (called *ilumquqs* or *ilunquqs*, consisting of the tongue, heart, rumen, stomach, aorta, and esophagus). Conversely, they point with pride to those who like Native foods. Afonie Takak was happy to report about his four-year-old granddaughter, "Holly's the one that likes [to eat] the eyes." At the same time, the growing disinterest or even actual dislike

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serving food, washing dishes, and resetting places at the table. The person whose namesday it is need not be present throughout the party. Birthday presents are not given at this time.

[93]Since W. Robertson Smith's 1889 publication *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, anthropologists have recognized the special nature of ritual feasts, whose main function, Smith argued, was to establish communion among human commensals and between humans and their god to whom the feast was dedicated and with whom it was shared (1965:39ff.).

of traditional foods among the young has led to an emphasis on those items which everyone enjoys, such as fish pie, smoked salmon, and caribou stew. These foods now represent other traditional foods which are not now eaten commonly.

Native foods are also symbolically important because of their emotional associations. First, they have been produced by the villagers' own labor and so represent self sufficiency and competence. Second, they are traditional. In eating these foods, people recognize a link with their ancestors and their own pasts. Third, the foods have pleasant associations which frequently are recalled. I heard many conversations about the cooking skills of various women now deceased, how unique their recipes had been, how sought-after were their dishes. Finally, because Native foods are different from "American" foods, they are a symbol which not only includes but also excludes others. For instance, if a non-Native visitor eats traditional food and likes it, she will be complimented, and her acceptance of Native food will be remarked upon to others. On the other hand, if someone refuses to eat the offered food, he or she will be discussed with disapproval for a long time afterward. Because eating food is a basic experience people take the rejection of their foods personally. Turning the rejection outward, they tend to label the visitor a perennial outsider.

The *Slaawiq* feasts are special in another way: at many houses they are structured very much like namesday feasts, though on a larger scale. The wife or mother of the household, with the help of adult daughters, prepares the food. She sets a table for eight or so, orchestrates turn-taking at the table, and washes dishes throughout the feast. If there is a huge crowd, some people may eat in the living room, sitting on chairs or floor.

Commensality has strong integrative functions, regardless of the kind of food being shared. As Robertson Smith (1965) noted in 1889, to the ancient Semites (and by extension to all people) "the very act of eating and drinking with a man was a symbol and a confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligations" (1965:41). The fact that no food is offered during the New Year's or masking celebrations may be an indication that these rituals are not as concerned with community integration and solidarity as is *Slaawiq*. Instead, these events seem to serve an expressive function, allowing individuals to break free of normally acceptable behavior. The absence of food further suggests that these celebrations are associated less closely with Russian Orthodoxy, the highest sacrament of which is the symbolic sharing of bread and wine in Holy Communion (cf. Ware 1991:282), than are rituals of commensality which consciously reenact the Eucharist.

Alutiiq Language. I have briefly discussed the importance of the third symbol which figures prominently in the Chignik Lake midwinter celebrations, the Alutiiq language. The singing of Alutiiq songs during starring is an integral part of the ritual, and one often remarked upon. Like Native foods, the language provides a link with the past and a feeling of distinctiveness from others. And like Native foods, the traditional language, and with it an important part of the culture, is seen to be endangered. Parents say that without knowledge of Alutiiq, children lose information from the past; they are estranged from their grandparents and their own ethnic history; they are unaware of the uniqueness of the Alutiiq culture and hence unwittingly endanger its future; and they cannot express things which can only be said in Alutiiq. Elders hope that if some parts of the language -- the songs -- are remembered, then Alutiiq will not die out completely.

Today English is spoken in most village homes, even by elders. Most middle-aged adults say they understand but cannot speak Alutiiq, while village youngsters understand a number of commands and nouns but cannot follow entire conversations. I heard the Native language most often at gatherings of older people, especially when one of the conversants was a monolingual Alutiiq speaker. In Perryville, for instance, Bingo is a favorite pasttime of Ignatius and Frieda Kosbruk (bilingual), Polly Yagie

(bilingual), Polly Shangin (monolingual Alutiiq), Clydia Kosbruk (bilingual), and Polly Shangin's sons (bilingual). Unless younger people also play, the only English words likely to be heard during the games are the numbers (e.g., "B-7") and a triumphant "Bingo!"

Alutiiq is used as an ethnic cue when others fail. For instance, Frieda Kosbruk told me of a time when she was at a Bingo parlor in Anchorage. The caller was yelling numbers very quickly, one after another. It is common practice for each player to work at least 10 cards at once (some work as many as three dozen), so the players were desperately trying to keep up as the man rattled the numbers off. Finally disgusted, Frieda said, in Alutiiq, "That guy's going so fast, he must have to go to the bathroom!" Two "blue-eyed blonde ladies" sitting next to her burst into laughter. "Do you speak my language?" Frieda asked them, embarrassed. "Of course! We're from Kodiak!" they answered.[94] Frieda often told this story to emphasize the fact that language is a more accurate ethnic marker than physical appearance.

Besides *Slaawiq* songs, the language's symbolic importance is demonstrated by frequent discussions about bilingual education. Widespread policies disallowing

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[94]I did not record this story but heard it often enough to be confident in placing quotation marks around particular portions.

Native language use in schools began to be reversed when in 1967 a new Federal Bilingual Education Act permitted (but did not require) bilingual education for those children whose first language was other than English. In 1972 the Alaska State Legislature enacted two bills, one which required primary education in students' native language (if there were a minimum of 15 non-English speaking students in the school), and the other which established the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a mission to study Native languages, develop bilingual teaching materials, and train bilingual teachers (Krauss 1980:28-30). Ralph Phillips of Perryville, Artemie Kalmakoff of Ivanof Bay, and Doris Lind of Chignik Lake were all trained by Jeff Leer of ANLC. They subsequently taught Alutiiq as a second language in their respective village schools for a number of years in the 1970s and early 1980s.

During the 1970s Alaska school districts received money to fund bilingual materials and teachers' salaries from the federal government under Title VII through a competitive grant-writing process. Beginning in the early 1980s, the State of Alaska included bilingual education monies in its foundation formula, funding districts in proportion to their number of enrolled bilingual students. The formula is based on a combination of population figures, cost of living differentials, and the English-

language ability of the students. For instance, "A" students are monolingual in a language other than English and receive full funding under the formula, while "E" students speak English exclusively but their manner of speaking reflects the grammatical structure of another language. One "E" student yields a district one-tenth of the funding of an "A" student. Under this formula, the Lake and Peninsula School District, with a student population fitting into the C, D, and E categories, received $79,910 for FY93.

In order to receive the bilingual portion of the education formula monies, each district must submit a Plan of Service detailing how it will serve its bilingual students. This in turn must be approved by the state's Department of Education. However, for a number of reasons these monies no longer necessarily result in programs which deal with the indigenous language.[95] Alaska State

[95]First, districts like the Lake and Peninsula School District which have almost exclusively Category C, D, and E students can choose from three educational models, only one of which offers Native as a Second Language courses (the others concentrate on the improvement of English language skills). Second, the Plan of Service is not directly tied to a budget but is part of the district's overall general fund received from state coffers, so districts have wide latitude in how they actually spend their bilingual money. Third, the Plans of Service are self-evaluated; Department of Education officials review district programs only for compliance with regulations, and state regulations do not specify program standards. Therefore there is no effective way for state personnel to evaluate bilingual programs or even determine whether they achieve their stated goals. Finally, even if school districts with a majority of C, D,

Department of Education official Mike Travis estimated that 40 to 45 percent of the districts in Alaska do not use all the bilingual money they receive for bilingual programs. A number of parents in Chignik Lake, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay told me they believe that the Lake and Peninsula School District is spending the bulk of its bilingual funds for student activities such as after-school gym hours and student travel to "A/A" (Athletic/Academic) meets. Yet almost every Alutiiq adult in the villages bemoaned the fact that bilingual education is no longer part of the school curriculum.

I asked one board member of the Lake and Peninsula School District why, in the face of such widespread parent support for bilingual education, the Alutiiq language was no longer taught at the local schools. She replied that the problem is limited resources. The district can *either* offer bilingual education *or* continue the supplementary English-language tutorials and student-activities they are presently providing. In written surveys, parents have said they were unwilling to give up the latter for the former. I was given the same answer by school district teachers and

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and E students chose to provide Native as Second Language programs, they would be hamstrung by a dearth of educational materials. Because those districts receive so little money, they could not afford to both produce curriculum and pay salaries unless they received additional outside funding (Travis, pers. comm. 1993).

administrators. They are firmly convinced that local parents do not consider bilingual education a priority.

I wondered why parents said one thing in conversation and another in written surveys. One possibility apparently not fully explored by the school district is that written surveys may not be the best way to learn what parents think. Another is that those surveys indeed may represent parents' educational priorities but not their deeply felt personal values. This philosophical separation of school and personal spheres has a history as long as the existence of public education in rural Alaska.

Since the first American schools opened on the Alaska Peninsula in 1922, they have fostered this cultural and social dualism. On the one hand, teachers have maintained cultural and linguistic (though not necessarily personal or emotional) distance from the villages. Their primary goal has been the production of upstanding and successful American citizens. Teachers thus explicitly act as agents of cultural change.

On the other hand, Alutiiqs acknowledge that the schools are a useful tool brought by the *Milik'aanat*. With a few exceptions, parents have tended to accept teachers' judgments on questions of subject matter and teaching methods.[96] From the beginning of public education on the

[96]This wholesale acceptance is changing in some matters. I attended a community-wide meeting in Perryville

peninsula, Alutiiqs were aware that school did not represent their own culture; on the contrary, its job was seen to be the preparation of children for the "other" culture.

This dualism persists, to a lesser extent, today. I believe that is why parents still can accept educational goals which only partially represent their own personal, culturally-based goals. They can appreciate the intangible beauty of a language which they believe adds richness, but not riches, to life without seeing it as a necessary part of the school curriculum. Most parents acknowledge that Alutiiq will not help the children do what school is supposed to teach them to do -- to succeed in 21st century America. It will not help them get jobs or make a living. An open gym after hours, however, does provide immediate help. It keeps the teenagers busy and out of trouble. Similarly, Athletic/Academic meets bring long-term benefits. They offer students a chance to work toward a goal, experience success, meet other young people, and learn about the rest of the world. English tutorials will help their children compete in the economic sphere after they leave school. Parents thus may consider the surveys

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in which parents were adamant about their disapproval of a particular school program which they felt intruded on their private lives.

irrelevant to the feelings they often voice about the importance of the Alutiiq language.

It is in this context -- knowledge of the impending death of the language, resentment that the educational system destroyed it, and acceptance of the fact that it will not help revive it -- that the Alutiiq *Slaawiq* songs are perpetuated, and through which they gain their symbolic impact.

Other Symbols. Two symbols which I believe are less dominant than the preceding three, but are still important and widespread, help explain the meaning behind Chignik Lake's January celebrations. These are masks and steam baths.

Masks are associated in the village with two celebrations, Hallowe'en and masquerading. Although I was not a witness to the former, in the absence of other evidence I repeat the impressions conveyed to me by the teachers, that Hallowe'en is celebrated there "just as it is in towns across the United States." Children dress up in homemade or store-bought costumes and go trick-or-treating for candy. Some may be wary of wandering spirits on that night, but for most the primary import of the holiday is the candy they receive.

Turner (1969) discussed Hallowe'en as a typical ritual of status reversal, wherein "the powers of the structurally

inferior are manifested in the liminal dominance of preadolescent children" (1969:172). Hallowe'en exemplifies the common liminal motif of anonymity (through masks), thereby allowing this role reversal.[97]

In masquerading, masking, as noted above, is carried out primarily by adult women or older adolescents; children participate only when they're old enough not to be afraid. Some people never overcome their fear and so never mask, though they have no reservations about sending their children out trick-or-treating. Still, there are important similarities between the two holidays. Although most masks worn by *maskalatagq* in Chignik Lake are hand-painted pillowcases, I have also seen a few full-head, store-bought Hallowe'en masks. While Hallowe'en emphasizes the "treats," masking focuses on the possible "tricks" in which the *maskalatagq* -- human and "real" -- might engage. The

[97]There are other functions besides concealing identity which masks serve. Crocker discusses common characteristics and functions of masks and masking rituals worldwide: both sacred and secular masks are generally credited with supernatural powers; through masks the wearer does not merely disguise himself, but actually transforms himself to a new identity; a mask may protect the wearer in interactions with supernatural powers, or indeed act as the conduit for those interactions; through their visual metaphors, masks may startle observers into thinking in new ways; and masks are often used in curing rituals (1982:77ff.). Fienup-Riordan has discussed the iconography of Yup'ik masks, emphasizing their role in enabling vision and ultimately movement and transformation between the mundane and supernatural spheres (1990:49-67).

gentler Hallowe'en holiday may serve as a kind of training for the more "real" dangers of masking.

Masking, like Hallowe'en, is a time of role reversal when devilish *maskalataqs* rather than socially responsible adults have the upper hand. The respective statuses of the individuals who mask and those who play the music for them are also pertinent in this regard. While Chignik Lake maskers are not what Turner (1969) would term "marginal," they are nonetheless not the village leaders; they are adolescents, young unmarried men, and women. I saw no grown men among the maskers.[98] In contrast, the musicians, those who must do the bidding of the *maskalataqs*, are men, in some cases the husbands of the maskers. During masking many small children are in the care of their fathers in a reversal of the more usual pattern in which the mother has the primary responsibility for their care.[99] This represents a reversal of status and role in this male-dominated society. In fact, the issue of women's roles is

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[98]This generalization does not hold for Perryville, where, I am told, Ignatius Kosbruk was the ring leader of the *maskalataqs* until 1993, when he hosted rather than performed. The analysis of masking as a ritual of reversal in Chignik Lake therefore may not hold for Perryville, where, I was told, only children mask and then only at Ignatius and Frieda Kosbruk's house. For one thing, in Perryville the ritual is not community-wide but draws only limited participation.

[99]I don't want to give the impression that fathers are not active in child care, for in fact I was impressed by the loving attention *all* adults and older children gave to babies and young children.

currently something of a hot topic among young women in Chignik Lake, where many are beginning to question their roles as "stay-at-home moms" whose primary duties are to serve husbands and care for children. Some women have begun to accompany their husbands on hunts as bear lookouts and observers.[100]

Turner (1969) suggested that rituals of status reversal, like masking, serve not only to reverse momentarily the prevailing social structure, but that they also achieve a temporary leveling of rights. Those with excess rights are bullied by those who normally have a deficiency of rights. This prepares people to accept and return to the normal situation after the ritual is completed.

Although Hallowe'en and masquerading are in some ways similar, there is a crucial difference in the "ownership" -- in effect, the Alutiiqness -- people feel toward masking as opposed to Hallowe'en. The latter is known to Chignik Lake entirely through the teachers, who for years have

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[100]Interestingly, there is precedence for women hunters in Chignik Lake. When Dora Andre's first husband died in the 1920s, she had to support herself and her children by trapping, fishing, and hunting until she married John Andre. Today, her granddaughter Virginia Aleck is known as an accomplished bear hunter, but she is the only woman I know who enjoys that distinction. She explained that she is simply following in her grandmother's footsteps but admitted that a number of the men, including her uncles (Dora's sons) had not at first approved of her hunting. I heard conjecture that occasional hunting mishaps may have been caused by Virginia's presence.

guided their students in putting up decorations of ghosts, witches, and hayricks, and making masks. In contrast, for all its comedy, masking is taken seriously, in part because it is seen as a traditional and obligatory ritual. This seriousness is further occasioned, I believe, by the time of year in which it takes place. Masking occurs shortly after the midwinter mark, when days are short and weather is often stormy. The summer and fall fishing are done, the August and September caribou hunts have been completed, and the December bear hunts have provided meat and fat. The holiday comes at a lull in the hunting. By its end men start thinking of going out for the caribou that are heading toward Port Heiden. Thus, although masking does not now serve as a thanksgiving celebration for a successful harvest as did, for instance, the Central Yup'ik *Kelek* celebration, it does coincide with the end of one seasonal round and the beginning of a new one. Similarly, as a ritual occurring at the end of one year and the beginning of another, it deals with a seasonal expulsion of evils as did original Hallowe'en celebrations and ensures that the social order as exhibited during the past year continues smoothly into the next.

Steam baths are another important part of Alutiiq life which have come -- apparently in a continuation of longstanding past practices -- to symbolize physical, mental, and ritual cleanliness. Several Alutiiqs living in

Anchorage have built their own *banyus*. Many told me they never feel clean in a regular bath or shower; only a steam "deep cleans" them. Until the current generation, the *banyu* served as an important location for healing activities. Pregnant women or those with aches, sores, or illnesses were treated by female healers in the *banyu*, while men were treated there by male counterparts. Importantly, illness in former days was attributed to both spiritual and physical causes, so those healing sessions involved both physical and spiritual cleansing. *Banyus* are still considered ritually important in some circumstances, particularly for hunters returning from a successful bear hunt. These men must take a steam to cleanse themselves of residual spiritual powers they may have picked up from the bear. Maskers, too, are supposed to steam after masking each night to purify their bodies of the dangerous powers with which they recently came into contact.

Ritual Relationships. Positional analysis as Turner explained it is not limited to a study of dominant symbols. Equally important is the study of the rituals in relation to each other. Together, the three January celebrations form a unified whole with a structure which I believe is meaningful to the people themselves.

That structure consists of two all-inclusive sacred rites (Christmas and Theophany) bracketing a period of

secular enjoyment and license (masking), in the middle of which is a third partly sacred, partly secular all-inclusive ritual (New Year's).

The holiday season begins with Christmas's three days of starring (a sacred activity) which includes all village members, past and present, quick and dead. Masking is linked with the final night of starring in the form of the four-legged "ghost" who shows up at the first house which is starred after dark. There follow three nights of non-religious masking at individual homes. Partly sacred, partly secular New Year's, marked by a church service and fireworks attended again by the whole community (and in the past marked by a special type of masking cermony), stands at the ceremonial period's midway point. Four more nights of masking at private homes culminate in a large-scale celebration that again brings the community together, this time at the school rather than at the church. Finally, the fast and feast of Theophany, celebrated by well-attended church services, close the season with the purification of holy water and its distribution to all houses in the village. A pattern in which central gathering alternates with dispersal is thus enacted each year in January.

This pattern itself echoes the Alutiiq yearly cycle. During the summer the village of Chignik Lake is all but abandoned as families move to fishing cabins on Chignik Lagoon. Although all cabins are on the "cannery side" of

the lagoon, they are spread out in a long, non-continuous strip. No footpaths connect the fishcamps, and in fact many are accessible only by boat. Similarly, there are no community-wide activities during the summer. Instead, each fishcamp or compound of fishcamps operates independently with residents occasionally visiting up and down the shore.

When school starts, people return to the village for the next nine months. However, this is only a partial return, for between September and December men often go on hunting trips to the surrounding countryside, while their wives and children stay in Chignik Lake. But for the two ritual weeks in January considered here, virtually everyone in the village stays close to home, and nonresident kin come from far and wide. During late January or early February hunting resumes when the days begin to get longer.

The rhythm of the January rituals is therefore a natural pattern for Chignik Lake residents. Consciously or unconsciously, through the pattern the people replay the alternation in village life between periods of dispersal during which food is gathered, people live relatively free of social strictures, and individual wanderlust is satisfied, and periods which focus on community life, successful harvests of subsistence foods, and social relationships. Neither pattern alone provides for all physical and social needs. Together they comprise a uniquely Alutiiq way of life.

Just as particular parts of the cycle are dominated by liminal experiences, so the entire cycle itself comprises a complex but unified ritual period which generates *communitas* by contrasting structured, norm-driven everyday life with a celebration of unstructured, egalitarian human potential. Turner (1969) stated that "cognitively, nothing underlines regularity so well as absurdity or paradox. Emotionally, nothing satisfies as much as extravagant or temporarily permitted illicit behavior" (1969:176). This describes the overall impact of Chignik Lake's January holidays.

On one level, masking is the essential liminal experience during these holidays. Its liminal characteristics include "attributes of sexlessness and anonymity" (Turner 1969:102); foolishness as opposed to sagacity (Turner 1969:106); a leveling and stripping "of all secular distinctions of status and rights over property" through *maskalataqs'* disguises (Turner 1969:169); and an essential comedic air, in common with other rituals of status reversal (Turner 1969:201). As noted above, the eventual result of masking is the recognition and approbation of those who are normally "background players" -- the wives and young unmarried adults -- and, at the same time, a reiteration of their normal supporting role in the community.

At another level, each activity within the January cycle generates its own *communitas*. The activity of starring in some ways also leads to a liminal experience. Pilgrimage itself, the metaphor which drives the procession of starrers from church to house and from house to house to welcome Christ, is akin to the liminal state, for "liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, conventon, and ceremonial" (Turner 1969:95). The process of journeying from house to house for eight or nine hours at a time produces in the participants a sense of "lowliness and sacredness, . . . homogeneity and comradeship" (Turner 1969:96). The starrers accept rather than avoid pain in this lengthy ordeal which continues each night regardless of fatigue, time, and weather (Turner 1969:107).

Most important for the achievement of a revitalized integrated community is the emotional impact of the two-week period. Hunting is not allowed on religious holidays. Relaxing and revitalizing *banyus* are a nightly event. People have time to chat and an inclination to do little else other than prepare for the coming night's activities as they wind down from those of the previous night. Old acquaintanceships are renewed, absent relatives return, and new friends are made. Everyone is both welcomed and appreciated, for the more participants there are in the

rituals, the more they achieve their religious and social goals.

Ritual and the Alutiiq Identity Configuration

Like all rituals, those which are repeated each January in Chignik Lake affirm relationships among the communicants and between them and the symbols within the rituals themselves. They reflect and perpetuate cultural and village membership and comradeship. Starring, masking, and New Year's in particular, with their complex mixture of Alutiiq and Russian Orthodox symbols, incorporate much that makes up today's Alutiiq identity configuration. Together their structure mirrors the ideal yearly cycle which is based on the exploitation of an environment rich in natural resources which surrounds a central village. They interweave the important themes of the Alutiiq language and Native subsistence foods. They acknowledge past beliefs in powers and customs unknown in Russian Orthodoxy.

These rituals also emphasize the vital part Russian Orthodoxy plays in the identities of Chignik Lake Alutiiqs. Besides enacting the January rituals, the people tell stories of missionaries (and even a Catholic priest) who were run out of town rather than be permitted to proselytize. People also tell many morality tales about desecrated churches elsewhere where people have "turned

away" from Orthodoxy. Often those who turned away were later stricken by afflictions such as partial paralysis.

If the January rituals contribute to an Alutiiq identity configuration, they are also symbols of solidarity at the village level. Every community celebrates *Slaawiq/Selaviq* differently. In some villages candy is the main food given to the starrers; in some starrers are given presents as well as food; in some each house is the site of an hour-long religious service; and in some alcoholic punch is served as part of the feast. The people of Chignik Lake are aware of these differences. They treat them as variations on a theme while maintaining a strong emotional attachment to their own version of the ritual.

I mentioned above that Chignik Lake is the center of starring activity on the Alaska Peninsula. The starring and masking in Perryville, by comparison, are truncated, limited to a single night each. I was told that few Perryvillers are involved in either for several reasons. First, the recent inroads made by Protestant missionaries in the village have drawn a number of people away from Russian Orthodoxy. The village is therefore no longer unanimously Orthodox. This has taken away potential starrers and has also rendered some houses unwelcome stops on the nightly route. Starring has had to be redefined merely as a church-wide, rather than community-wide event.

Second, Perryville has not had a resident priest since 1989 when Father Harry Kaiakokonok died. There has been no *matushka* (wife of the priest) to oversee church social activities. There has been no Sunday school or regular instruction of the young. No one has been present to regularly inject enthusiasm and vitality into the church, or to relate the village's current activities to the teachings of the church in a weekly sermon.

Finally, the 1992 completion of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing at the site of the berry flats a half mile from the old part of the village at first made it difficult for older starrers to follow the star for the whole night. Distances down unlit dirt roads are too great for many.[101]

One of the responses Perryvillers have made to the changing religious situation in their village has been to emphasize the universally acceptable and more secular history of the village's formation as its main integrative symbol in preference to the religious symbols which were previously paramount. Some elders are still attempting to revivify Orthodoxy; for instance, a common theme in Ignatius and Frieda Kosbruk's stories is the effectiveness

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[101]I was told that in 1993 the starrers had overcome this obstacle and had driven hondas down the road, returning several times to transport all the starrers. Frieda Kosbruk told me the 1993 starring season was one of the best in years.

of holy objects (such as holy water, an icon, or a cross) in overcoming various dangers and evils. However, community behavior, particularly evident in changes in the ways Perryville residents enact the January rituals, tends away from Orthodoxy as an integrative theme.

This raises the question posed in Chapter IV concerning the Katmai story: do the January holidays serve an overall Alutiiq identity configuration, or are they most meaningful at the community level?

The answer is, paradoxically, that they do both. On the one hand, people from many other villages and towns visit Chignik Lake during starring, so in that sense it is a ritual inclusive of any who care to participate. However, visitors generally leave before masking goes into full swing. Thus the complete cycle of January rituals is primarily effective only at the village level. On the other hand, part of the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq identity configuration, deriving (as far as can be extrapolated) from precontact practice as well as early and modern historical processes, is precisely the centrality of each village. Being an Alutiiq implies being from a particular village. As in the past, it does not mean that all local customs are uniform among all Alutiiqs from every community. Thus a ritual emphasis on one village can at the same time speak to identity at the community level and at the level of ethnicity.

CHAPTER VII

ALUTIIQS AND OUTSIDERS

Ethnicity is relevant only when two or more peoples interact within a single system. It is therefore appropriate to consider ways in which Alutiiqs have understood and reacted to those whom they have perceived as different from themselves.

Folklore and history indicate that Alutiiqs have used four strategies in dealing with outsiders: alliance or incorporation, battle, avoidance, and ridicule. In this chapter I consider the "others" with whom Alutiiqs interacted and about whom they tell stories. I look at how reactions to strangers have affected the Alutiiq identity configuration; for instance, how the characteristics attributed to others have, through opposition, defined what an Alutiiq is. I suggest that the perceived characteristics of outsiders have changed along with Alutiiq conceptions of self and history. Finally, I consider the different situations in which the four strategies are put to use.

Alliance or Incorporation

Alliance theories account for the ways in which previously unrelated and unallied people are brought into each other's social spheres in a friendly and mutually acceptable way. Burch and Correll (1971) point out that most Eskimo alliance mechanisms involved the manipulation of the kinship system in some way. In other words, previous non-kin were made kin through a variety of strategies and thereby brought into the social sphere. Other anthropologists (e.g., Guemple 1971) stress the flexibility and built-in potential for individual choice which Eskimo alliance strategies have allowed. They argue against the prescriptive model which they assert accompanies kinship models. Guemple maintains that the

> Eskimo world view postulates a social universe populated by actors who are not only or necessarily related to each other in terms of biological linkage, either in fact or by metaphorical extension. I believe, instead, that they see themselves as free to determine what will constitute the substance of their social networks, and that the forms which have been labeled "alliances" in this volume are the expressions of that underlying world view (1971:7).

Burch (1975) noted that among northwest Alaskan Iñupiat the individual choice which Guemple reported

operated *within* the bounds of the kinship system. The system's flexibility, he argued, lay in

> comparatively broad (but by no means complete) freedom of individual choice regarding the specific people one would interact with on any particular basis. In other words, flexibility lay in the allocation of people among the positions in the system, not in a lack of definition as to how peole filling particular positions should behave (Burch 1975:62).

Most cases of alliance and social integration of outsiders which I observed among the Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs involved the metaphor of kinship. *All* narratives dealing with alliance portrayed practices which fit within the range of traditional Eskimo alliance patterns documented elsewhere, which include adoption, betrothal (a stronger tie in some areas than others), marriage, namesake relationships, spouse exchange, and various partnerships and ritual roles (such as hunting, trading, or joking partnerships) (Guemple 1971:3-4).

Adoption is common in both Perryville and Chignik Lake, as indeed it has been traditionally throughout Iñupiat and Yup'ik societies (cf. Burch 1975:129ff.; Ellanna 1983:174ff., 236ff., 278ff., 325ff.). In these two villages, most adopted children were born outside the village, often to relatives who had moved to Anchorage or Fairbanks. The adoptees are almost always consanguineally related to someone in the village, though not necessarily

to the couple who adopted them.[102] The adopted children become integrated fully into village life and are considered as completely Alutiiq as their parents, regardless of their genetic background.

Informal adoption, whereby a child is given to grandparents or an aunt to be raised, is also common in Perryville and Chignik Lake. One or both birth parents usually live in the village as well, but for a number of reasons it has been decided that it would be best if the child lived with the other relative. The child continues to call his or her birth parents "Mom" or "Dad." In some ways he or she is treated as the child of the grandparents (for instance, school work and report cards are brought home to them), but on other occasions the birth parents take parental responsibility. For instance, the mother rather than grandmother may hold a namesday party for the child.

Children are also adopted out of the villages. I became acquainted with a woman who had been adopted from an Alutiiq family from Egegik some 30 years ago by a white couple in Washington state. In the late 1980s she found her birth mother and visited the village for the first time. She was surprised to discover that she was

[102]It may be that *all* adoptees were consanguineally related to villagers; I simply did not learn who the birth parents were in all cases.

considered as much a member of the community, and as much an Alutiiq, as those who had grown up there. This woman had remained a potential kinswoman all her life but had only activated that relationship when she met and spent time with her relatives. Her experience validates Guemple's assertions

> first, that people must actively participate in the system to be counted as kinsmen in a meaningful way, and second, that those who enter the field of face-to-face relations must be treated as kinsmen whether genealogical connections exist to support the claim or not (1971:75).

I heard evidence of this dormant potential for activating kinship ties in many conversations with peninsula Alutiiqs. People often told each other of encounters in other towns with those who turned out to be relatives. Once I asked a woman how distantly related a person would have to be not to be considered a relative. She responded, puzzled, that anyone who was in any way related to her was her relative.

Just as kinship is recognized in anyone discovered to be a relative with whom one comes into contact, so it is applied to those who become relatives through adoption. Thus the non-Alutiiq or half-Alutiiq children who are adopted into Peryville and Chignik Lake become, through the fact of adoption as well as through daily face-to-face

interactions, fully related and integrated community members and Alutiiqs.

As noted above, marriages occur more often between residents of Chignik Lake and Perryville than with people from other locales. In those cases where a spouse comes from a different village or town and is non-Alutiiq, he or she is never considered an Alutiiq but is accepted and integrated into village life to varying degrees depending on a complex set of criteria including personal characteristics, social role in the community, and other social ties to the village. The children of such unions are accepted as full-fledged Alutiiq community members (like the Creole children in Katmai during the Russian days, discussed above).

Godparenthood is another relationship which sometimes draws non-Alutiiqs into a family's life. In Perryville and Chignik Lake, godparents are most often consanguineal relatives of one of the parents. Sometimes, however, the godparents are chosen from among other (usually local affinal kin) Orthodox friends or relatives with whom the parents have special friendships. The godparents, or *krasnas*, have the responsibility of instructing their godchildren in the faith. They treat them in some ways like their own children, giving them gifts, babysitting them, instructing them, and when necessary reprimanding them. In fact, Frieda Kosbruk told me that her

goddaughters call her "*Maamasinaq*" (literally, "Big mother" or "Big momma"). I often saw *krasnas* take over the care of their young godchildren in church. If a child was squirming or disruptive, his *krasna* would pick him up, walk him outside for a while, or otherwise divert him, allowing the parents to worship in peace. To the Orthodox church members in Chignik Lake and Perryville, godparenthood should be, ideally, a kinship role second only to parenthood in importance, sentiment, and strength.

Another relationship of incorporation which derives from both Alutiiq and Russian customs is the namesake, or *aapaq*. Recently Fienup-Riordan (1990:44-45) has followed other anthropologists in noting the importance of the namesake relationship among Eskimos (cf. also Guemple 1971:3; Burch 1975). Almost 200 years ago Davydov was told of a Prince William Sound Alutiiq naming custom in which

> they exchange names with the people they select as friends. . . . One Chugach asked Baranov's permission to exchange names with his "son"; this was how they referred to Baranov's big dog, Sargach, because they could see how devoted he was to his master. And so the old man began to call himself Sargach and brought his friend fish and other things to eat, and tried to please him in every way (1977:171).

The particular form of the namesake relationship in Chignik Lake and Perryville seems to have arisen from a merging of similar traditional Eskimo elements and Russian Orthodox

practice. Generally, babies are named after a living (less often a deceased, as among the Iñupiat and Central Yup'ik) relative or friend. I did not find evidence that the naming was accompanied by a belief that "in the newborn child the soul of the recently dead is born again" (Fienup-Riordan 1990:45) as reported among the Central Yup'ik. Instead, conferring a person's name on an infant is undertaken as a sign of respect, honor, love, and remembrance.

Additionally, a kinship-like social link is implied when two people share a name. Little children are introduced to newcomers who have the same name with the statement, "Say hello to your *aapaq*!" Adults are expected to take a special interest in their namesakes, regardless of consanguineal or affinal relationship. When an *aapaq* relationship is found to exist between a stranger and a resident, there is a noticeable warming in the welcome the stranger receives.[103]

The *aapaq* relationship refers to English names, but every Orthodox child also has a Russian saint's name or "church name." There is some relationship between the two, for the child's saint's name depends on the proximity of his birth or baptism date to the saint's day in the church calendar. An English name in turn often coincides or

[103]In Russian tradition there is also a special term for one's namesake: *tëzka*.

relates in some way to the saint's name. For instance, "Polly" is the most frequent English name for those whose saint's name is Periscovia [in Russian, *Praskovia* or *Paraskēva*]. "Frieda" refers to "Felicitata." And so on. Thus those who have the same English name often also have the same saint's day and so are related in the church as well as having birthdays close to each other.

The *aapaq* relationships fits within a broader category of fictive kinship (cf. Burch 1975:46, 52). I experienced another example of fictive kinship in the way I was treated while staying in the villages. I came to be considered "Auntie" by some of the grandchildren of my Chignik Lake landlady, and a "grandmother" of two great-grandchildren of my Perryville hosts. In neither case was this occasioned by a formal adoption or, in fact, by any formal declaration. Rather, it was the explicit statement of a relationship which had evolved through time. In Chignik Lake the children began calling me "Auntie" because I acted like one to them. The children concluded that as a frequent long-term visitor from Anchorage, I must be either a teacher or a relative. The former was quickly eliminated, and the latter was supported by practice as I visited with the children's mothers and grandmothers, brought them presents, ate with them, starred with them, held their babies, and kissed the children and parents after church.

In Perryville, I held, fed, and burped the baby, read to and played with the older brother, and marveled over their accomplishments with other adults, just as a grandmother does. Further, I was close to the children's own grandmother (my hosts' daughter) in both age and interests, and we got along well. My Perryville hosts jokingly began referring to me in their Alutiiq conversations with other elders as their "daughter" (*pani'aq*), peering closely to see if I understood. When I did, this reinforced the aptness of the designation, and it stuck.

Other alliances within the villages often fell along kinship lines. For instance, I was asked most often to go berry picking and take steam baths with daughters and granddaughters of my host family. This pattern of women's work and visiting groups seemed to hold for many other families as well. Although most of the strong friendships between women involved sisters, this was not always the case. Nonrelated women (or distant cousins) also spoke of close lifelong friendships with each other.

Because of the fairly rigid line drawn between men's and women's spheres in Perryville and Chignik Lake, my data on the makeup and nature of men's hunting partnerships is spotty. Anecdotal evidence suggests that hunting partners are generally related in some way (often brothers, father and sons, or brothers-in-law), but that the specific choice

of which of his many relatives a man might hunt with depends on personal preference and compatibility (a widely reported phenomenon; cf. Bogojavlensky 1969 and Burch 1975). In exceptional cases white male teachers have become hunting partners with local men. In these situations a strong friendship had grown between the men based on compatibility, a common skill level, and a common love of hunting and being outdoors. But because teachers are routinely transferred from one village to another every three or four years, these relationships were not permanent. Guemple (1971) notes that an understanding of this sort of temporary, situational alliance is aided by reference to the works of Firth (1951), Barnes (1954), Bott (1957) and Barth (1966), all of whom explored individual choice and the establishment and maintenance of social networks (see Chapter II above).

Thus in men's hunting partnerships, as in other areas of the Alutiiq social system, the network of affinal and consanguineal relationships seems to be manipulated to accord with individual needs and circumstances but is not the sole means of building alliances.

In Chapter III I reviewed the historic evidence concerning strategies for precontact inter-group alliances including trade partnerships and village-exogamic marriage. I also suggested that similar alliance mechanisms operated in the Katmai *artel* during the Russian period among the

diverse peoples who settled and traded together. In contrast to the historic record, the folklore and ethnohistories I was told contain few references to alliance or incorporation. Exceptions concern the "Russians," or Creoles, and the temporary acceptance of some white men after an initiation of some sort.

The social position of the "Russians" from Mitrofania *vis à vis* local Alutiiqs was discussed in Chapter III. Although people consider them to have been somewhat different from their Alutiiq peers, they recognize the valuable role these "Russians" played as innovators and cultural brokers who interpreted and interceded on behalf of local Alutiiqs with established sources of power. These people were seen as different but not socially marginal. They conformed to Alutiiq mores (i.e., they subscribed to the same religious beliefs and social constraints), but not always to Alutiiq norms (they were more educated, more familiar with the established religion and economic system). By the second generation their families had been entirely assimilated into local Alutiiq life; their children and grandchildren comprise many of today's Alutiiq residents of Perryville and Chignik Lake.

The second set of incorporation stories consists of the memorates about whites who were temporarily accepted after having gone through an initiation of sorts. Like the few teachers who have become hunting or trapping partners

of local Alutiiqs, these whites were accepted only into particular spheres of activity such as the church, subsistence hunting, or commercial fishing and usually only for a limited time.

A favorite initiation anecdote, recounted to me three times by three different men, involves the *banyu*, or steam bath. Most *banyus* in use today are semi-subterranean well-insulated plywood buildings. They have two small rooms, an outer dressing room and the inner *banyu* proper, which is dominated by a large oil drum tipped on its side, half-buried in the dirt, and converted into a wood stove. On top of the curved surface of the stove are large rocks which hold and distribute heat. There are two huge buckets of water, one heating up on top of the stove and the other filled with cool water, resting on the raised plywood floor against an outer wall. Veterans like to throw water on the rocks to produce steam and make the *banyu* extremely hot. Neophytes often try to stay close to the ground near the door which they surreptitiously may crack open for a breath of cool air every now and then. There is good-natured competition to see who can stand the hottest *banyu*. I heard this competition expressed most often between men or between a husband and wife. "I used to chase Ignatius out of the *banyu*," Frieda Kosbruk told me one time, "but I can't take it so hot any more."

The anecdote about newcomers in the banyu took the following shape when Bill Lind told it to me:

> Banyu Story as told by Bill Lind
> October 22, 1992
> Chignik Lake, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> I had a crew one time. Fishing crew from Seattle. Mike and [unclear], their name was. They were down Sourdough Flats. And we were gonna wash, you know. Make banyu. So I made a banyu. Good and hot too, boy. I told them to wash. They said they wanted to wash. I asked them, "You guys washed before?" "No." I told them, "When it get too hot, . . . put some cold water on [the rocks], when it get too cold to put some hot water from the hot bucket." And they did that. Then Mike and them come out, they just run! . . . I laughed, boy! . . . I had them for quite a while. . . They were easy to get along with, too.

As this story shows, there was a mild element of ridicule in the story -- rather than explain the effects of water on hot rocks, the narrator preferred to test the intelligence of his guests. However, because the men went through the initiation (presumably good-naturedly) and continued to work well with Bill, they were accepted and allowed to participate in his economic activities for as long as was mutually desirable.

Battle

Most of the lore I was told deals not with tales of outsiders becoming incorporated into Alutiiq society, but rather with battles against outsiders, with individuals breaking cultural norms and being cast out of society, or with those who are by their nature totally outside the human sphere.

In Chapter III I reviewed accounts of warfare by 18th and 19th century observers Polonskii (n.d.), Davydov (1977), Gideon (1989), Bolotov (Black 1977), Merck (1980), Veniaminov (1984) and Holmberg (1985). These chroniclers reported frequent battles between Alutiiqs from the Alaska Peninsula and Unangan, among Alutiiqs themselves, and between Koniag Alutiiqs and "Aliaksintsy," who may have been other Alutiiq-speakers, Yup'iks, or Dena'ina Athabaskans. Battle stories are still told by Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, but the enemies are now always Unangan Aleuts, or *Taya'uqs*, never Dena'ina, Koniags or Yup'iks.

These omissions may represent either an alteration of Alutiiq conceptions of who the enemy were or biased collection techniques. I attempted to correct for the latter by asking for battle stories about war with other enemies or battles between Alutiiq settlements. The only remembered "old" story about relationships between Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs and other Alaska Peninsula inhabitants

(most likely either Dena'ina or Kiatagmiut) is about a starving young man from Lake Iliamna whose grandmother sent him on a pilgrimage to Katmai after everyone else in their village died of starvation. The boy found help and food among the Katmai people -- not warfare and treachery. Of war stories, only those against *Taya'uq* enemies are remembered. Today's Alutiiq storytellers insist that their precontact era enemies were the *Taya'uqs*.[104]

I believe this is the result of several factors. For one, interaction between peninsula and Kodiak Alutiiqs has been peaceful since the early days of the Katmai *artel*, when Koniags were transported to the Russian settlement. With proximity, the Koniags ceased to be viewed with animosity. The similarities in culture and language and increased intermarriage (see Chapter III) undoubtedly facilitated the change in attitude. Second, memories of pre-Katmai intertribal relationships are strongly colored by the testimony of Father Harry Kaiakokonok, whose Athabaskan father met his Alutiiq mother on a trading trip to Katmai. This example of friendly relations between Alutiiqs and Dena'ina is presented by today's Peninsula

[104]Interestingly, this does not relate in any way to current attitudes toward Unangans. Two Chignik Lake men and one woman are married to Unangans, and two Unangan Creole men from the island of Unga married into Perryville in the 1920s. All these individuals are highly regarded and not associated in any way with the stories of ancient battles against other *Taya'uqs*.

Alutiiqs as a generalizable example of the pre-Katmai interethnic situation.

The relationship between Alutiiqs and Unangan is a special case. The two peoples were traditionally bitter enemies who did not engage in the ameliorating activities of trade or kinship alliance with each other. Thus their animosity was not softened by peacetime activities as was the case with Koniags and Dena'ina. Furthermore, the Alutiiq population shift southward during the early 20th century brought Alutiiqs and Unangan into regular close contact for the first time. As the most visible and convenient "others" for 20th century Alutiiqs, the *Taya'uqs* became the universal precontact enemy.

An actual change in the perception of the enemy's identity is supported by a comparison of two similar stories told by men a generation apart in age. The first, told by Father Harry in 1975, was recorded by U.S. National Park Service ranger Michael Tollefson. Father Harry described a battle which took place near Katmai. Note that he did not identify the enemy.

Island Battle as told by Father Harry Kaiakokonok
October 22, 1975
Perryville, Alaska
Recorded in English

According to all these people, our fathers used to tell, the island had only one place where a person could get on top. And so wide, not too wide a place. Nice place. And this village was located on top. And used to be war from northward and westward and southeast and the people used to have several logs and them pieces of hard wood attached like pegs.

Q: Spikes?

Yep, and when the warrior get inside, their commander hollers them, "We are caught, we are caught! You fellows got us, we are helpless! How are we gonna do that? We have no weapons. We don't have enough men to fight you. You can come up slaughter us the way you like. We're free to you!"

Well, there's several people waiting with big logs. And the commanding officer telling us, "You come up and do what you like with us. We ready to die." Because we don't have enough men. We got no weapons. Their people laughing. They just pull up their kayaks and all put up their weapons, spears, arrows. They go up laughing and making fun of them, how easy we gonna slaughter you people when you are helpless though you said go up.

Just about a little ways from the top, the commander holler, "Release!" and that log, big log, roll down and get everybody. There lot of men on top. They don't show them. Let only one commanding officer talking from the top, and that's how it works, show how few people there were and let them come up to slaughter us. Just before they come up on top "Release!" and the log roll down and kill everyone. They claim this island to be rough. That their people fix it so it will be smooth all the way down. Smooth, so when the log roll down, nobody can go through underneath. You can find out that there's one island, one spot that's no other place you can climb.

Q: It was between Kaflia and Katmai?

Yeah.

Interestingly, the practice of rolling heavy objects down upon the enemy (in this case spiked logs, in the historic record large rocks) was also reported in the Polonskii (n.d.) manuscript, while the use of offshore islands as battle sanctuaries is well documented (e.g., Gideon 1989:44; Moss and Erlandson 1992).

Sixty year-old Chignik Lagoon resident and former bilingual teacher Mike Sam told me a similar story 15 years later in 1990, but he located his story on Spitz Island near Mitrofania and identified the enemy as Aleuts (Unangan). Several Perryvillers told me the battle between Alutiiqs and *Taya'uqs* had taken place on Shapka Island, even closer to Perryville. The fact that both Spitz and Shapka Islands are south of the accepted precontact boundary between Unangan and Alutiiq territories suggests that the story's location was reassigned when the people moved south.

> Battle on Spitz Island as told by Mike Sam
> June 4, 1990
> Chignik Lagoon, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> Mitrofan Island, a little bit west of it, is a small little island. There's only one place you can go up it, that's on the west side of it where there's kind of a little valley with grass growing all the way up. I don't know if they planted the grass or not. All the rest of the island is rocky, and there's grass up on top.

People were hunting around [Spitz] island and they saw those Aleuts from the islands coming. You could see a long way; there's a lot of water between the islands. So they hid their kayaks and they landed there, went to the top, and hollered down to the Aleuts, "We're up here! Come get us!"

There was a big log up there with big spikes, like nails. They rolled it down the grassy slope. There was no way the Aleuts could jump aside because it was rocky on both sides of the grassy valley. The log was about twelve feet long and they'd roll it down and get every one of them.

Ignatius Kosbruk told another story (which he termed a *quli'anguaq*) about a battle between Alutiiqs and *Taya'uqs*. Like all of Ignatius's "old Alutiiq stories," this takes place at Katmai. The English translation which follows was written with the assistance of Ignatius Kosbruk and Ralph Phillips. Portions originally told in English are in italics.

Mellquq as told by Ignatius Kosbruk
March 26, 1992
Perryville, Alaska
English translation

Here's another story I heard. Long ago, people used to have wars; they fought *like today*. Today that's how people live. Aleuts are different people; they used to fight with our relatives, the Alutiiqs.

Well, they were fighting like that. They say they were killing each other; *like the Civil War, I think*.

Now one time one from that village was named Mellquq. He was a liar. Those people didn't believe him, he was always lying. People of that village didn't believe him, because they used to know the kind of person he was. He

lied. That one lied. That one lied to them. Mellquq -- Mellquq means liar. *Never tell the truth,* Mellquq.

So then there in the village he had a wife. He had children; he must have been married. There in the village, he was living among them. One time he was walking along the beach looking for bow stem parts for his kayak, walking along the beach looking for wood. Maybe the Katmai beach. It's a long beach. He was walking along the beach. Just before he got to the end, he looked to one side, seeing something. Suddenly he saw them there -- people. Lying on their stomachs. They were across the creek *under -- under the bank he was looking, and he pretend --* then he pretended not to see them, continuing his walk on the beach. *Thousands of people were gathered along the bank, but he managed all the way to the end. And he didn't get excited.* He didn't rush, but passed by there. He passed them by as if he didn't see them. When he got to the end, then he came back, *do the same thing. He didn't get excited. But he seen all those people lying along the grass and he didn't see no kayaks or nothing. They hide their kayaks too in that river, inside that river.*

Then he pretended not to see them, walking the beach, on his way back. Then when he didn't see them any more, he walked fast, returning to the village to his people. He went to the head council, the bosses, the war lieutenants. *Officer in charge, I guess. He told him about them Taya'uqs.* He told that village to pack up. There were lots of Aleuts on the end of the beach lying on their stomachs.

And the people didn't believe him. They didn't believe him.

"Mellquq, that's how he lies. He's lying. *He's telling a lie."* *The people didn't believe him. So he took his family, all his kids and his wife and went up to the hill, and hide -- hide away from them enemies.* Then he listened to them; suddenly in the night, suddenly they screamed. They cried -- *making all kinds of noise, and here the Taya'uqs were, march right in, while, they caught them while they were sleeping. And clubbed every one of 'em, killed 'em all.*

And towards morning the village was so quiet. And when the day break they went down.

Every one of 'em were killed. The whole village.

They killed them. Then he took his family and went down. *And when he get to the road he seen a dead body, without head. He kicked the head and say, he tell them guys,* "That's how Mellquq lies!" *But the whole village was conquered by the Taya'uqs. Not one soul left.*

And then from there they notified the other village. There used to be another island someplace and them guys know where it is. Our army then, they capture them. During the night they cleaned every one of 'em, the Taya'uqs. Some run into their kayaks. You know them Taya'uqs used to have a kayak open on the end and drain the water out, and leave them like an angle so the water will drain out on the end?

Then they opened the end and drained it, *on the end of the kayak. They tied -- they keep 'em tied up and when they land they drain the water out. And* when the army arrived that's how they *captured 'em. Without* their knowing, in the night, they got them, *the same bunch.*

That when that army left, they got there, clubbed them, and used bows and arrows. *They never used to -- Taya'uqs never used to have war bow and arrow. They didn't know nothing about it. They just clobbered 'em. And some that tried to survive, they ran into their kayaks and go out. As soon as they get halfway down in the sea they sank backwards because they didn't have a chance to tie their drainage in the kayak, end of their kayaks. They drowned themselves.*

Boy, that used to be a big story, about them.

That's the funniest part, when he went down to the village and when he meet that head without -- body without a head and he kick that. Kicked them head and tell him, "That's how Mellquq lies!" *And then the whole village was conquered.*

That's all.

This story has Unangan warriors traveling immense distances along the Alaska Peninsula coast to engage in battle. Veniaminov (1984) reported that the Unangan indeed

journeyed far north to do battle against the Aglurmiut of Bristol Bay, but

> ceased raiding [them] because the north coasts of Aliaksa are shallow, lack landing places, and most importantly, because these [shores] are poor in tide flats products (1984:205).

The *Mellquq* story includes interesting ethnographic detail in the description of Unangan kayak sterns. When Ignatius says "*Taya'uqs* never used to have war bow and arrow. They didn't know nothing about it," he is probably referring to the Unangan use of the throwing board and dart rather than the bow and arrow.[105] Contemporary Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs erroneously consider the throwing board to be uniquely *Taya'uq*, despite the fact that their own ancestors used it to hunt sea otters during the days of the fur trade.[106]

There is some indication that this story, like *Macintine*, was part of Spiridon Stepanoff's repertoire. Aleck Constantine of Port Heiden told me a story he had heard many times from Spiridon. Once there was a battle between resident Alutiiqs and invading Unangan in Port

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[105]In fact, the Unangan did use the bow and arrow in warfare (Veniaminov 1984:209).

[106]At one point in the research I showed photographs of old Alutiiq hunting implements to the older hunters in the villages. Only Aleck Constantine and Harry Aleck recognized the throwing board, but both maintained that it was *Taya'uq* rather than Alutiiq and neither knew its Alutiiq name.

Moller Bay.[107] There are high banks at the bay. The Unangan landed at night, climbed the bank, and waited in the brush for the Alutiiqs, just as the *Taya'uqs* waited while Mellquq walked the length of the beach. Meanwhile, Alutiiqs at the shore slit the sterns of the Unangan kayaks. When the Unangan tried to escape, they paddled out to sea, sank, and drowned. Spiridon also explained that the bows and arrows of the Alutiiqs were much faster than the throwing boards and darts of the Unangan. While the latter were still winding up for the throw, the Alutiiq arrows would pierce them in the chest.[108]

The *Mellquq* story is partly about the dangers of categorizing a man by his past actions.[109] It has a more important message for purposes of this study which it shares with other battle narratives: viz., the sharp ethnic boundary it draws between Alutiiqs and Unangan. The three

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[107]The fact that it was the Alutiiqs, rather than Unangan, who were the residents of Port Moller is interesting, since archaeologically and ethnographically Port Moller is considered the northeasternmost Unangan village. The idea that it was an Alutiiq village may have derived from Aleck Constantine's own experiences there working in a cannery, when many other Alutiiqs were also seasonal workers there.

[108]Unfortunately, Aleck did not record this story, so the version presented here is based my notes, made as he told the tale.

[109]As such it exemplifies the southwestern Eskimo dislike of strict taxonomies in favor of judgments based on action or experience. It further fits with the Yup'ik belief in the possibility of unsuspected character traits which can only be known as they are manifest through externally observed action (cf. Morrow 1990).

stories reproduced above define Alutiiqness in contrast with the character of their unworthy enemies. The tales celebrate the uniquely Alutiiq characteristics of bravery, intelligence, quick-wittedness, and humor.

Avoidance

In contrast to the *Taya'uqs*, there are some adversaries who are too dangerous to fight. Not only are they physically stronger than Alutiiqs, but they can also overpower them through supernatural means unless the Alutiiq is properly protected (by a cross, for instance). Further, not being human (or, in the case of runaways, having repudiated human society), normal rules of comportment do not apply to them and therefore they are unpredictable in their behavior.

The largest group of these outsiders is known on the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak, and Afognak Islands as *a'ula'at* (commonly called *a'ula'aqs*; singular *a'ula'aq* [Perryville] or *arula'aq* [Chignik Lake], from the verb "to run away", *a'ularlluni, arularlluni*). *A'ula'aqs* are not human, although it is possible for them to be mistaken for people, and for people who go to live with them to take on their characteristics. They are strong and hairy and live in villages that look like human settlements. They usually

eat their meat raw and can be warded off with a cross or holy water.

Belief in "wildmen," "hairy men," runaways, "Bigfoot," and "brush men" was held among most Alaska Native peoples. Anthropologists have noted the myriad forms that spirits and non-human beings take in Eskimo cosmology across the arctic (cf. Oswalt 1967:214ff.; Burch 1971), but the runaway or hairy man seems to be limited among Esk-Aleuts to the Unangan, Central Yup'ik and Alutiiq areas of southwestern Alaska. In this region he is described in remarkably similar terms to Athabaskan counterparts. In fact, the term by which he is known in Nanwalek [English Bay] (where the Chugach dialect of Alutiiq is spoken) is *nantiinaq*, a derivative of the Dena'ina Athabaskan term *nant'ina*. Like the Athabaskan brush Indian or Nakani (cf. Osgood 1959:110ff., 1966:171-3 and 1970:157; McKennan 1959:160-1 and 1975:77), the Alaska Peninsula *a'ula'aq* is chiefly dangerous because he abducts people and lures them away from human society.[110]

The best strategy with *a'ula'aqs* is to avoid them altogether. Some stories suggest ways to escape if one unwittingly comes upon them. For instance, Bill Lind

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[110]For contemporary "wildman" stories from other parts of southwestern Alaska, refer to Vick (1983:38-42), the Feb. 28 - Mar. 6, 1993 edition of *Channel Markers* TV supplement, and English Bay's school publications *Alexandrovsk*, Numbers 1 and 2 (1980, 1981).

repeated a story he had been told in which a trapper encountered an *a'ula'aq* near Kodiak. As the trapper climbed a small hill to check his traps, the *a'ula'aq* climbed the opposite side of the hill and they met at the top. The human outwitted the *a'ula'aq* by moving to one side, knowing that the *a'ula'aq* would mirror his actions. Then he moved to the other side. Then he moved forward, still copied by the *a'ula'aq*. Finally he moved back down the hill. The *a'ula'aq* did likewise, and when he was out of sight on the other side of the hill the trapper turned tail and ran back to his trapping partners.

Two Chignik Lake women described to me other *a'ula'aq*-like beings. Some are called *suks,* which are beings "who took care of a certain creek." The word *suk* means "person" or "human being" in Alutiiq, but its possessive form *sua* ("its person") traditionally referred to the spirit of natural forces and living things, both human and non-human.[111] In Yup'ik culture the *yua* of an animal "resembles a human being" and is hence portrayed as a human face on Yup'ik masks (Ray 1967:9). The *suks* described to me are apparently a modern manifestation of the traditional *suas;* those "who took care of a certain creek" appear to have derived from what were formerly understood to be the creeks' *suas*.

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[111]The comparable Iñupiat and Yup'ik terms respectively are *inua* and *yua*.

This class of beings now seems to have merged with *a'ula'aqs* in local understanding. They take a variety of forms, including a beautiful, seductive woman (see the description of the *nunam sua* or "spirit of the land" in Birket-Smith 1953:121-2) and a man with hairy whiskers who walks with a cane, but their primary danger is that they lure humans away from the human world. Another being also grouped with *a'ula'aqs* is called *usiillraarpak* (literally "a super child"). It cries and lures people up its ravine whence they never return. Doris Lind explained to me that this being was the "baby with the big mouth," a creature whose story is frequently told in Yup'ik areas of the state. In fact, Doris referred me to the printed transcript and translation of the story as told in Yup'ik by John Wassillie, Sr. of Nunapitchuk (Vick 1983:320-7; cf. also Burch 1971:153).

Two processes seem to be operating in altering Alutiiq conceptions of spiritually dangerous outsiders. First, a number of previously separate categories (*a'ula'aqs*, *suks*, *usiillraarpak*, as well as human runaways, discussed below) have been conflated to represent a single type of ominous and unpredictable outsider with abilities beyond the scope of mortal humans. Second, the nature of these beings has undergone a subtle change. As non-human beings, *a'ula'aqs* and *suks* do not speak to ethnic differentiation as do other types of outsiders. In fact their dramatic and

psychological impacts result from their being entirely outside of the human realm. In this sense they emphasize common humanity. In recent years, however, some *a'ula'aq* encounters have mirrored interethnic rather than inter-specific interactions. In these instances the *a'ula'aqs* seem to represent the double-edged allure and danger of white people and culture. I here reproduce several narratives to illustrate these processes.

The first *a'ula'aq* narratives printed below portray the more traditional attitude about the creatures. The following story was told to Doris Lind (now in her 70s) when she was a young girl.

The man captured by the *arula'at*, told by Doris Lind
Told May 2, 1991 and January 15 & 23, 1992
Paraphrased from fieldnotes, checked by Doris Lind
Chignik Lake, Alaska

A man was captured by the *arula'at*. They took him to their house. They built a big bonfire in the middle. The flames rose up through the central smoke hole. The man lived with them and learned to eat their raw meat, though sometimes they would barbecue things over the fire.

The man stayed there a year and the *arula'at* told him to go home, but he didn't want to; he was used to their ways. They made him go.

He went back to his village and oooh! it stank to him. (They used outhouses in those days; the wind must have been strong in a certain direction.) He hadn't shaved when he was with the *arula'at*, so he was all bushy, like an animal. No one recognized him.

Finally, his wife or his child recognized him. They shaved him, and he began to live with humans again.

Doris Lind told another story that took place near Egegik. Her grandparents used to tell this story every time they passed the spot where it had happened.

The *arula'aq* visitor, told by Doris Lind
Told May 2, 1991 and January 15 & 23, 1992
Paraphrased from fieldnotes, checked by Doris
Chignik Lake, Alaska

A woman's husband was out hunting and had been gone for a while. One day a strange man came and asked for some bread and tea. She gave it to him. Her little son was there and the man stroked his shoulder. "What a cute little boy you have," he said.

But as he stroked, the boy let out a scream. When the mother looked at his arm it was all blue and bruised. The man had not been a true person, but a wildman [*arula'aq*].

Later the mother took her cross off and handed it to her son and said she was going out hooking for fish. She had a neighbor watch the children. They all waited until late at night, but she never returned home.

The next day they went down by the river and saw her tracks leading away from the river, but then the tracks would stop and start again some distance away. It seems something had carried her part of the way. She was never heard from again. It was the *arula'aq* that had taken her away.

Sixty-year-old Emil Artemie of Chignik Lake (originally from Perryville) also spoke with me about

a'ula'aqs. He began telling about some thefts that were blamed on them.

A'ula'aqs in Perryville, as told by Emil Artemie
January 24, 1992
Chignik Lake, Alaska
Recorded in English

Oh, yeah. Wildman. I believed in 'em too. In fact, in Perryville there, somebody claimed they had seen 'em stealing smoked salmon, salt salmon, dried fish, stuff they have in those caches, you know. But I've never seen one. They're supposed to have hair all over them. Even the teachers used to beware, the first ones that I know that taught me there about eleven, twelve years. Anyhow, they had a wildman hanging around Perryville one time stealing everything. Could have been our own local people far as I'm concerned. They said that they'd walk over the ground they float so high. I don't believe it, even [though] my uncle told me that. And, anyway, the teachers worry, had a flashlight, walking back and forth, patrolling the village. They didn't encounter them or anything.

But I told them "You'll walk the street and he'll be in the background all the time." That's where they should have been looking. I know, me, I lost some stuff, I know it wasn't no wildman. Lost some traps and kerosene, stuff like that. I know he wasn't out there. I know who it was.

That's probably the reason why it started, that nonsense about wildmen.

Many people expressed doubts about the existence or nature of *a'ula'aqs*. The most common explanation among the doubters was that the *a'ula'aqs* were actual runaways, possibly white soldiers who had been stationed in the area

during World War II. This explanation is an interesting parallel to Veniaminov's (1984) 19th century contention that the Unangan "Outside men" [*beglye* or "vagabonds"] were not supernatural beings but rather humans who had run away from the excessive violence of early Russian conquerors (1984:173, 249). Olga Kalmakoff and her son Joe came to a similar conclusion about 20th century *a'ula'aqs*:

> *A'ula'aqs* discussed by Joe and Olga Kalmakoff
> April 3, 1992
> Ivanof Bay, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> Joe: Yeah, there was a lot of stories about the *a'ula'aqs*.
> Olga: Yeah, there was a lot of 'em
> Joe: But I've always said, "Well, these got to be --" at a really young age I always said, "Well, these got to be runaways from the service and deserters, whatever," you know. I didn't buy this supernatural stuff or whatever it was. But I've always had room to listen for that.
> Olga: I used to hear a lot of that, about *a'ula'aqs*. . . . There was runaways too, runaways in canoes like he said.

Emil Artemie continued his discussion of *a'ula'aqs* and runaways with a story about white men who actually had run away from the military service:

> Deserters, as told by Emil Artemie
> January 24, 1992
> Chignik Lake, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> But during the war, you know, there were deserters. They turned in one or two of them, going out in the rafts. Either they jump

> overboard with a liferaft or something. Picked up one or two of them, one time, one skipper here, down the bay. Turned 'em in. The Army boat had 'em fishing or something. They were outsiders.
>
> You'd be surprised the kids that were in the service during the war. Just kids, some of them. Eighteen years old. And some of 'em had never seen an ocean in their lives. We could tell. They used to stop down the bay, and they ask me one time, a couple of them came ashore and I was at the beach working on a skiff or something. "Can we walk to Seattle from here?" "I suppose you could but it's going to be a very long walk," I said. I figure they thought there might be a highway out on the other side of the mountains, maybe. Anyway there was four or five of them took off. Seen them packing their gear, into an old skiff they got holed up under the dock in the afternoon. But they took off, pretty soon I seen them, there at the ridge of the mountain down the bay. You look up there, there's a ridge, you know. That was them cruisin' around out there. They come back in the evening, to their boat, and their skipper just say, "Welcome back, boys."

Boris Kosbruk of Perryville also remembered World War II army deserters. He said that once in the summer of 1947, he saw a teacher walking around carrying a big pistol. The man had come upon a cave which was perfectly neat. There was a sleeping bag in it. The teacher had taken the sleeping bag and showed it around the village. Boris's father Emil was mad, because the man who owned it must have been an army AWOL from Cold Bay or Port Heiden, and would suffer without it.

The AWOL soldiers from the Second World War are like *a'ula'aqs* in some ways. They lived alone, shying from

human contact; they were said to be hairy, having not had a chance to shave; and were linguistic, cultural and social outsiders. In fact, like *a'ula'aqs*, they had chosen to become outsiders to all human society.

Other local residents believe that *a'ula'aqs* and *suks* are non-human beings rather than human runaways. However, some of the creatures they describe as *a'ula'aqs* do not completely agree with traditional descriptions. Some *a'ula'aqs* looked unmistakably like Russians or Americans. For instance, Virginia Aleck of Chignik Lake (originally from Perryville) told of an encounter which her foster brother Sammy Stepanoff had had with an *a'ula'aq* years ago:

Sammy Stepanoff's encounter with the *a'ula'aq*: as told by Virginia Aleck
Also present were Doris Lind and Patricia Partnow
January 13, 1993
Chignik Lake, Alaska
Recorded in English

DL: Did Sammy seen one?
VA: Yeah. I was with him! I was with him over, we used to go
DL: Oh, you was with him?
VA: Yeah.
PP: What did it look like?
VA: No, I didn't see him, I was on that same trip with him. Bunch of us went over one evening to get some *uutuks* [sea urchins] and *uriitaqs* [chitons]. There was Clara, Agnes, I, Sammy. . . . But anyway, Sammy heard our dog. We lost our little dog before that. And we heard a dog whining. You know, a dog way far away. And Sammy said he'll go check, he said he thinks it's coming from a little ravine over in Three-Star Point. We were over there anyway, and Sammy told us to wait right where we were.

> And I was real scared, I remember. Everybody was scared! And Sammy took off and went up the hill and then, that was before his grandfather died. In fact, just days before his real grandfather died. And it seems like the noise that we were hearing was getting louder and louder. It was real eery. A real eery-sounding howl, you know, like a dog crying. And Sammy never came back, never came back. And when he came back, he was running! And I told him, I said, "Sammy," I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "There's an old man up there! There's an old man!" He said he was just -- the puppy was there. And he said he was gonna pick up the puppy, and just when he was picking up the puppy, there was a pair of pants legs. Just appeared out of nowhere in front of him. You couldn't see his feet because the bottom cuff like this was covering his feet. Then he looked up and there was big long whiskers! Old man just standing there looking at him. And he said he couldn't move for a while, he just turned around, ran down the hill, and all of us started running back from Three-Star Point.
>
> DL: Gee, that's pretty far.
>
> . . .
>
> VA: And we got back home and Gramma knew there was something wrong because the minute we came through the door, she gave us holy water. . . . And then a couple of days later his grandfather died.

Alutiiq men generally do not have thick facial hair. This *a'ula'aq's* bushy whiskers, pants legs, and cane (which Virginia later recalled, saying that this being was probably "the *suk* with the cane") are more typical of a European than either a non-human or an Alutiiq runaway. I was also told of an *a'ula'aq* who was a woman with long

blonde hair. She appeared in a roadway and attempted to lure a young girl away from her parents.[112]

There are other outsiders who are known to be humans but are also assiduously avoided. For instance, like the AWOL soldiers, in more recent days there were "hippies" who had dropped out of society and come to Alaska for freedom and adventure. According to local residents, they "went wild" once their supplies had run out. Some lived among the wolves or bears, eventually being devoured by them. These human runaways appear to be a contemporary Alutiiq counterpart to the traditional Eskimo "drifter," a loner who drifts away on the moving sea ice. Bogojavlensky reported that among King Islanders the drifter "is considered evil and treacherous, and 'not like other men, who have been in warmth'" (1969:201). He described the attitude King Islanders had toward drifters:

> If a hunter meets a drifter, the procedure is either to hide from him and to let him pass, or to kill him. On no account must a drifter be rescued and brought back to the village, for men who have been roaming on the moving ice are no longer suitable for human society (Bogojavlensky 1969:201-02).

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[112]I am not suggesting that variation in the physical form *a'ula'aqs* take is a new phenomenon. It is probable that *a'ula'aqs* and *suks*, like other Eskimo supernatural beings, are viewed as changeable, exhibiting themselves somewhat differently in each human encounter (cf. Morrow 1990:152). The point here is that the specific form *a'ula'aqs* have begun to take is new, and fits closely with observed European or American physical characteristics.

There is also a persistent story about a Russian spy who lived alone in a thickly fortified cabin along the coast north of Chignik Bay.[113] In 1969 Spiridon Stepanoff had this to say about him:

> Conversation, Spiridon Stepanoff, Bill Lind, Don Kinsey (teacher)
> 1969
> Chignik Lake, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> SS: Yeah, he used to be Russian spy. He give me Russian records once, you know. Them Russian, told me not to show it to nobody. Not to tell nobody. And we used to play the Russian records. He got 'em from Russia, you know. And I tried to talk to him in Russian, he wouldn't talk, he said! I think he was hiding. He wouldn't talk. They found his, afterwards they found his -- what was it? -- camera thing, something, down [unclear]. What was the other thing they found? You know?
> BL: They found some papers and a shortwave radio, I think.
> SS: . . . He had a radar of some kind, you know.

These outsiders are all strange and dangerous. *A'ula'aqs* have always been associated with the peril of being alone in an unknown area or trusting untrustworthy strangers. Runaways, like Iñupiat drifters, live in a sphere

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[113]Linda Ellana (pers. comm. 1993) and Phyllis Morrow (pers. comm. 1993) also report that there are persistent stories about Russian spies among the Dena'ina and Central Yup'ik respectively.

> where the established social ties and social constraints are not operative. . . . [This is] the realm of the non-social, anti-human, pathologically suspicious and hostile . . . "drifter" (Bogojavlensky 1969:203).

The European-looking *a'ula'aqs*, *suks*, and runaways represent an additional threat, the danger of loss of both life and culture. Like their more traditional counterparts, they are seen to have an almost irresistible power which can only be countered by quick minds and feet and powerful religious (i.e., Russian Orthodox) beliefs.

Ridicule

Ridicule as a strategy of social control has been well documented among Alaskan Eskimo societies (cf. Oswalt 1967:185, 187; Morrow 1984:133, 1990:148-9). Fienup-Riordan (1990) was told that on Nelson Island, Eskimo dancing arose as a replacement for warfare and notes that many dances have as their stated goal the ridicule of various members of the audience (1990:138).

Ridicule seems to serve the same integrative purpose in some cases on the Alaska Peninsula today,[114] but I am

[114]For instance, Ignatius Kosbruk tells a story about Waankaanguaq (literally, "Little Ivan"), who coveted a certain part of the seal and was furious one time when he found that his partner had eaten it. The partner calmly got up, hiked to a bay where seals were abundant, shot a

here concerned only with how it is directed toward those who are outside the society. Ridicule stories deal with outsiders when direct methods of retribution are inappropriate (e.g., too harsh for the offense), ineffective (the outsiders wouldn't notice them), or unavailable (the power balance is too one-sided). The stories may be somewhat effective in changing -- or preventing -- undesirable behavior, for they are told to other white people as object lessons.[115] However, their popularity within the society seems to stem from their function of relieving tension about an unequal economic and social system while reinforcing the insider-outsider rift.[116]

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seal, cut out the portion that Wankanguaq craved, carried it back to the camp, and slapped the meat on the table without a word. The story is told as a caution against picky eating, stinginess, and bossiness.

[115]Morrow (pers. comm. 1993) reports that "Yupiit believe that peoples' bad deeds come back to them without humans intervening in most cases; gossip doesn't need to actually reach the offender's ears to be effective."

[116]Cf. also Basso's (1979) *Portraits of the "Whiteman"* in which he discusses humorous but biting Apache imitations of "the Whiteman." Basso reports that he is aware of "Whiteman" jokes among many Native American groups, but that the form they take depends on the image of "Whiteman" which is strongest in the particular locale, which in turn depends to some extent on white attitudes about Indians. He states, "Whereas the opposition 'Indian' vs. 'Whiteman' is fixed and culturally general, the manner in which this opposition is interpreted is mutable and culturally specific" (1979:5).

If the first three groups of outsiders discussed above can be characterized respectively as potential kinsmen, actual enemies, and supernatural tempters, then the last is made up of bosses. In Alutiiq folklore they take the form of stock characters, represented most vividly by Macintine. In contrast to the boss character, the Alutiiqs in these stories take on the familiar role of "wise simpletons" encountered in folklore around the world. These are characters "who strip off the pretentions of holders of high rank and reduce them to the level of common humanity and mortality" (Turner 1969:110).

Bosses and simpletons thus appear in stories about unequal economic, social, and political power. The stories are similar to the "travellers'" tales told by itinerate Irish tinkers (cf. Gmelch 1986) and, indeed, have the same basic structure as underdog or "fool" narratives told around the world. They poke fun at people (usually men, in my experience) who may not be physical threats to residents but who possess wealth and power which the Alutiiqs do not have. The irony is that in spite of their wealth, the "bosses" are ignorant and hence incapable of functioning properly in normal (Alutiiq) society. A clever Alutiiq can -- and does -- easily take advantage of them.

The *Macintine* story is unusual in Alutiiq lore in that the boss character is permanently removed. The story about the Norwegian trappers who cheated the Katmai refugees out

of a desirable village site at Ivanof Bay contains a similar level of animosity, but in this case the victims find retribution only through telling and retelling the story and ultimately through the fact that they are still here and the Norwegian trappers are long gone. There are similar tales about odd or nasty white fox farmers who lived on small islands off the peninsula's Pacific coast during the first half of the 20th century.

Other stories are humorous rather than bitter or vindictive in their treatment of the social gap between the two peoples. They are generally personal memorates with no great time depth, and the central character, the "wise fool," is the narrator himself. These stories accept the presence of the bosses but recount ways in which Alutiiqs have gotten around them or bested them. The *banyu* story, reported above, is an example of a boss story, although in Bill Lind's memorate he was the boss and the white men were his workers. The *banyu* initiates in the two other versions I heard were white fishermen from Kodiak and a visiting Russian Orthodox priest. Emil Artemie's story about the sailors who tried to run away during World War II, transcribed above, also pokes fun at whites who are supposed to be superior to the local Alutiiqs.

Other examples of this kind of story were told to Bill and Doris Lind and teacher Don Kinsey by Spiridon

Stepanoff. In the first, Spiridon was at a trapping camp with Randy San, the Russian spy mentioned above.

> Bear grease, as told by Spiridon Stepanoff
> 1969
> Chignik Lake, Alaska
> Recorded in English
>
> Like one young fellow, call him Randy, you know. "I heard somebody told me," [he] says, "they put bear grease" -- he was bald headed, you know. "Bear grease is good for him, makes the hair grow."
> "Are you mad?" that's what [I said].
> So he got some stinking bear grease, you know, and he put it in the jar over the stove, so they get proper stink. He rub it in his hair, right in. He stunk! Goddam it, it stink! I made him lay down southeast [downwind] of me! It spoil his clothes and everything, you know, rubbing that head with rotten bear grease. Wouldn't be so bad if it don't get rank, you know. It was rotten! . . .
> Bear grease don't stink when it's fresh, you know. When it get rotten, it stinks, too, same as anything. So, his hair didn't grow though.

This story should be considered in the context of the symbolic importance of Native foods and the many negative comments whites have made about how badly it "stinks." Spiridon demonstrates that only when it is rotten does bear grease smell bad and then only because of the unbelievable and comical ignorance of a white man.

Spiridon also told about a fatal canoe accident which some "millionaires" had in the early 20th century. The men had decided to travel by canoe from Nushagak down the Bristol Bay shore of the Peninsula to Port Heiden and

Unangashik, then across the Peninsula along Black and Chignik Lakes, and finally down the Chignik River to Chignik Lagoon.

The Millionaires' Accident, as told by Spiridon Stepanoff
1969
Chignik Lake, Alaska
Recorded in English

They never made it. I don't see why they traveling in that little canoe up in Bristol Bay. Come from, I don't know, from Nushagak or somewheres. They come all the way down. That little canoe. Three men.

They knowed it, you know. They wired down they was coming here. The canneries down there, they know they was coming. They wire down.

I was gonna buy gas boat, a little gas boat from superintendent, you know, big skiff. But they need it; I try to buy it. And all he says, "Can't sell that," he says, "because millionaires coming down through the lake to here." Says, "This boat, they gonna take that boat, skiff, from here to go back to Seattle along the coast. Once these fellas get here."

I said, "They're crazy to use that boat; too small!" But when he was there, you know, and it started to blow. That week, same week, and they started to blow, even the hurricane, northwest, you know. And that's the time they drownded up here. . . .

And when it calmed 'em, they find 'em up here. The superintendent in Anchorage Bay [the location of the town of Chignik Bay], he told me, they get wire from 'em, you know. They was coming. He was saving that skiff for them fellas. They was prospecting oil.

Spiridon plays only a minor role in this story, as the knowledgeable Alutiiq bystander whose desire to buy the boat is put aside in deference to the request of some white

"millionaires." One obvious message of this story is that money is no match for knowledge and common sense, both of which Spiridon had, and neither of which the white men possessed.

Walter Stepanoff, nephew of Spiridon, told me another "boss" story. The *Star* in this narrative was the old Coast Guard cutter that used to carry mail and supplies up and down the coast of the Alaska Peninsula.

Buying candy on the *Star*, as told by Walter Stepanoff
June 4, 1990
Chignik Bay, Alaska
Recorded in English

Talking about the old *Star*, every time I think of something. I was just young. It used to stop in and they had a purser, he used to take care of the little place there, where they had candy and stuff for sale. And I had 50 cents, and so I waited when the Star came in. A lot of people, locals that stayed here, went aboard.

And I went, and the purser was in there busy so I bought 50 cents worth of candy, ten bars I think. I got it and in the meantime one guy from here and another guy, they were arguing about something. They got in with the purser, I don't know what it was over. Probably it was over some freight or something.

And the purser had all this change in this cigar box, and they were arguing and I was just young and I stopped and I was listening. I probably stopped with my mouth open, probably watching them. And they were arguing, and the purser he was kind of tall and he looked over and he saw me still standing there. He dug in the box, threw 50 cents up and I took it and I left. I guess he thought I was waiting for my change. I got my 50 cents back and I took off.

I get a kick out of that when I think about it.

This story shows a boy getting the best of an adult who has power and money. It sends the message that the bosses aren't so smart after all, and, further, that they are fair game for such petty tricks. After all, it is well known that they have cheated the Alutiiqs out of thousands of dollars through the years. The social gap between the two peoples is reinforced in the different rules appropriate for dealing with whites on the one hand and fellow Alutiiqs on the other.

Change through History

How do Alutiiq perceptions of outsiders in the history and lore contribute to a deeper understanding of Alutiiq ethnicity?

First, by contrast with outsiders, an ideal Alutiiq character begins to take shape. Battle stories imply that Alutiiqs should continue to be (as they were in the past) brave, clever and intelligent. *A'ula'aq* stories are reminders that humans are part of a universe which is made up of dangerous elements beyond their control but which can be restrained somewhat with the aid of holy water, icons, crosses, and sanctified ground. The stories, when told by Orthodox faithful, show that the most effective weapon against such beings is the Russian Orthodox religion. The

"boss" stories indicate that in dealings with those who are supposedly their superiors in economic and social status, Alutiiqs can be quicker, wittier, and more knowledgeable and can eventually come out on top.

Second, the lore and history indicate that certain classes of outsiders are seen to be different now than in the past. I believe these changes have occurred in response to perceived threats to Alutiiq identity. Some threats are broadly phrased, like the widespread implication (seen in non-Alutiiq versions of the Katmai story, *Macintine*, and others) that Alutiiqs are an inferior people. Others are more specific, attacking symbols with which Alutiiqs identify so strongly that the attack is perceived to be against the people themselves. As noted in Chapter III, three such items currently under attack are the Alutiiq language, Russian Orthodoxy, and Native subsistence practices and foods.

One noticeable change in outsider identity appeared in battle stories. The Dena'ina and Koniags, two peoples against whom Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs had traditionally fought, are now considered relatives rather than enemies. The *Taya'uqs*, a people known to be both linguistically and culturally different from the Alutiiqs, have come to be identified as the stock enemies to the exclusion of all others.

The most dangerous beings outside Alutiiq society, the *a'ula'aqs* and *suks*, have also merged together and changed from older representations. Their nature has altered from the powerful and dangerous but sometimes beneficial *suks* which Birket-Smith found in the mid-20th century (Birket-Smith 1953:121ff) to frightening unidimensional bogey-men. This change has coincided with an increase in fears among the elders that their children are being seduced and captured by American culture. It has also coincided with an elaboration of stories about particular white men and their dangerously or humorously antisocial ways. These changes in the lore suggest that Alutiiqs today consider the most dangerous outside threats to their culture to emanate not from the unknown and sparsely populated bush, but from the equally unknown but densely populated American society.

Finally, the ways Alutiiqs treat different classes of strangers are instructive in understanding how they view themselves and ethnic differentiation in general. Today, as in the past, an impulse toward alliance and, more importantly, incorporation of disparate peoples and cultural elements, is the strategy of choice for Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs. Whenever possible, Alutiiqs seek common ground in interactions with newcomers. They readily establish fictive kinship ties, engage in new hunting partnerships, welcome those who choose to follow or,

indeed, express an interest in their lifeways. They adapt to new technology and embrace new music, clothing, and entertainment.

It is only when the stranger opts not to enter into an equal alliance that other strategies are called into play. Those people who are intent on fighting with the Alutiiqs will be met with literal or figurative violence (i.e., through stories). Those who insist on maintaining a superior attitude while remaining closed-minded toward Alutiiq ways are excluded and ridiculed. And those whose nature and actions are completely inexplicable will be feared, avoided, and ultimately shunned by members of Alutiiq society.

CHAPTER VIII

ALUTIIQ IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY THEORY

In this final chapter I define the symbols which make up the contemporary Alutiiq identity configuration, suggest that this configuration has both local and peninsula-wide applications, and review how and under what circumstances definitions of Alutiiqness have changed through time and over space. I introduce a principle which I term "activation" as a way of understanding individual variation in Alutiiq ethnicity -- that is, who is considered an Alutiiq, why he or she is so considered, and how an individual's ascription might change through time.

I also consider the contributions the Alutiiq case makes to a general anthropological discussion of ethnicity. Of particular interest are the concept of ethnic identity configuration, the emergence of ethnic identity through performance, and the conflict and situational models of ethnicity.

The Alutiiq Identity Configuration

Throughout this work I have referred to Spicer's (1980) concept of ethnic identity configuration in discussing the symbolic dimensions which accompany

Alutiiqness. As a set of symbols, the identity configuration speaks to the cultural dimension of ethnicity -- the beliefs and meanings which are part of being a particular people. Although individual portions of the configuration may be shared among a number of peoples (e.g., religion or language), the *configuration* -- the combination of elements -- is unique for a given ethnicity.

The concept of identity configuration is also useful in understanding behavior and social interactions, for people act in patterned ways in accordance with and in response to their understandings of their actions' symbolic meanings -- or, in some cases, their understandings of the proper procedures which represent the symbolic meanings (cf. Fernandez 1965). For instance, for Alutiiqs, Native foods are an important ethnic symbol. But they are not merely an idea that stands for Alutiiqness -- they are also actual foods which are obtained through certain techniques in certain frames of mind for certain purposes, served and eaten at actual occasions, and discussed in particular ways. Thus ethnic symbols inform and help define *actions* as well as *beliefs*.

Finally, the idea of an identity configuration speaks to the interactive nature of ethnicity -- the fact that ethnicities are relevant in relation to each other, not in and of themselves. In this regard, I have suggested that several characteristics of today's Alutiiq identity have

become symbolically important precisely because they are endangered by encroachments from the larger American culture. For instance, the Alutiiq language is tenaciously maintained as a symbol of Alutiiqness, having successfully distinguished Alutiiqs from the powerful intruders for 200 years. In fact the language no longer -- or rarely -- serves to exclude non-Alutiiqs; its use just as easily excludes young Alutiiqs who cannot speak it. Yet the Alutiiq language continues to be invoked and utilized as a periodic reminder and reinforcement of Alutiiq identity.

Like all symbols, those which make up an ethnic identity configuration are doubled-edged. On the one hand people consciously use them to represent and focus their ethnic distinctiveness. On the other, the symbols themselves are so strongly associated with Alutiiqness that whenever they appear, they evoke a sense of ethnic difference and belonging regardless of intent. It is important to remember that the *symbols themselves* -- not their meanings -- are the units of the identity configuration. People may disagree about the symbols' meanings, just as a single individual may sometimes see one meaning in a particular symbol and at other times see another; but there is general agreement on what the symbols are. Therefore, a necessary first step in discovering what people consider to be distinctive about themselves and in understanding how they communicate their identity both to

themselves and to outsiders is an identification of the symbols they use.

I observed two levels of ethnic identity configuration in the performance of oral tradition, community ritual, and daily behavior. The broader of the two consists of symbols which I found to be shared by virtually all peninsula Alutiiqs who are concerned with Alutiiqness. These include ties to particular geographic areas within the Alaska Peninsula (though the specific locales vary from individual to individual), a belief in a shared history with other Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs, some level of subsistence lifestyle, a recognition of Alutiiq as the ancestral language, and a kinship link to Alutiiqs of the past. These are compatible -- and in some cases identical -- with the "dominant" symbols (after Turner 1967) expressed through Chignik Lake midwinter rituals. Furthermore, these five "core" components accord closely with those which Castile (1981) found to be common among ethnicities worldwide.

Just as there appears to be unanimous agreement among Alutiiqs on these dimensions of Alutiiqness, so it seems that these five factors represent the *minimum* characteristics that define an "active" or "practicing" Alutiiq. In other words, if any of the five is missing from a person's belief system (though not necessarily from his actions), then the person would not consider himself an

Alutiiq and would not be so considered by other Alutiiqs. Thus, for instance, a person could not become an Alutiiq simply by adopting an Alutiiq lifestyle unless he or she also could establish kinship links with Alutiiq predecessors.

I introduce an operating principle which I call "activation," borrowing from Guemple ("people must actively participate in the system to be counted as kinsmen" [1971:75]) and Burch (I see activation as the converse of his "deactivation," wherein a given consanguineal relationship may not be recognized or acted upon [1975:55-6]). I use "activation" to mean that (1) unrealized potential for ethnic ascription may exist indefinitely without danger of irrevocable loss (e.g., a person may have a job in Anchorage and not harvest any subsistence foods, yet retains the potential to do so in the future; or a person may be born into an Alutiiq family and be adopted out without losing her essential Alutiiqness); (2) once the potential is actualized, status as an insider is as complete as if it had always been in place; and (3) an individual's *intention* or *desire* to activate the symbols which constitute Alutiiqness is itself an adequate signal of belongingness. If other Alutiiqs know of this intention or desire, the person's claims to Alutiiqness are that much stronger.

Alutiiqs thus do not "disown" someone for failing to live according to ethnic ideals. The "lapsed Alutiiq" Scandinavian-Aleut families discussed in Chapter III are a case in point. In fact, individual variation in expressing Alutiiqness becomes understandable precisely because differences in the interpretation of symbols are expected, as are differences in acting on those symbols. Just as Alutiiqs believe that each person sees the world (including the symbols of Alutiiqness) differently, so they expect people to choose -- or be able -- to accentuate different dimensions of Alutiiqness at different times in their lives depending on circumstances. Viewed as examples of ethnic activation, individual actions which express or invoke Alutiiqness in one instance but not another are no longer problematic, as they would be in boundary-focused theories. The problem is not one of deviation from the norm of continuous ethnic ascription, since in the Alutiiq case there is no such norm. Instead, individual variation is expected; ethnicity is not seen to be relevant in all cases; and ethnic ascription does not depend on continuously summoning the symbols of Alutiiqness.

The principle of activation helps explain why the "Russians" of the early 20th century, who did not consider themselves Alutiiqs, raised children who do. As kin of their Alutiiq neighbors, these "Russians" always had the potential to assert membership in that ethnicity, as

therefore (according to Burch's [1975] principle of augmentation) did their children. Some of the symbolic markers of "Russianness" -- particularly facility with the Russian language -- were lost to the younger generation who attended American schools where only English was allowed. What was left of their parents' Creole identity configuration was similar to that of their Alutiiq relatives. Both upheld the importance of ties to the land, employed identical subsistence practices, considered Alutiiq an ancestral language, and adhered to Russian Orthodoxy. The primary difference lay in degree (the "Russians" were considered more knowledgeable about the church and the American economic system) and in slightly divergent histories. But history, like ethnicity, is emergent, depending on perception and emphasis. Through the years the Alutiiq side of history was emphasized more and more and the Creole side forgotten, so that today the children of "Russians" note that their parents were from Mitrofania, but do not know particulars of their pasts. In contrast, they are very knowledgeable about such events in Alutiiq history as the Katmai eruption. Thus in social history and in other areas the younger generation increasingly activated and emphasized its ties to its Alutiiq heritage. Finally, after Mitrofania Village was abandoned in the 1930s there was no longer a geographic distinction between the "Russians" and Alutiiqs, and within

a generation social, cultural, and symbolic distinctions disappeared as well.

There are other sets of symbols associated with Alutiiqness besides the five I have designated the "core." These are based in particular villages and are recognized only by those people from the respective villages. Following a brief discussion of the five broader symbols, I will discuss the three local manifestations with which I became familiar, those based in Chignik Lake, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay.

Symbol 1: Ties to Particular Geographic Areas Within the Alaska Peninsula

The Alutiiqs I met are grounded in the land. They have a strong sense of place which accompanies them no matter where they travel. Similarly, their lore exhibits that sense of place. With the exception of a handful of shape-shifting stories, the narratives which people identified as "Alutiiq" occurred at specific locations on the Alaska Peninsula. The "oldest" stories are set in Katmai which, though now primarily a symbolic place, nonetheless usually is described before the action of the story unfolds (cf. *Mellquq*). More recent stories also follow this trend; hunting and trapping stories are set in the particular campsites, ridges, or trails where they

occurred. Doris Lind told me that her grandparents repeated stories about *arula'at* whenever they passed the bend in the river where an *arula'aq* had once appeared to a woman they knew. When I went berry picking or shellfish collecting, my companions recounted events that had occurred in or near the berry patches or rocks we visited. Even stories about particular individuals generally -- in my experience always -- are prefaced with a description of the locale in which the narrator heard or witnessed them. Some of my most fruitful interviews occurred when I spread a map of the Alaska Peninsula on the table and asked people to talk about it. In this way I learned war and hunting stories, the history of land use, recollections about subsistence practices, tales of long journeys, childhood memories, and anecdotes about individuals who lived in various parts of the peninsula.

When I interviewed people living in Anchorage, they too related their narratives to particular places. Knowing that I had visited the peninsula, they usually prefaced a story with, "Do you remember that creek out behind the village? Well, one time . . . ," or something similar. Whether an Alutiiq lives in Chignik Lake or Anchorage, through stories he or she is tied to the land in immediate and strong, as well as symbolic, ways.

Nineteenth century chroniclers reported that the village was the largest entity with which the Alutiiqs of

Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula identified and to which they expressed loyalty. This local focus continues today. For some, the Alaska Peninsula is now, and always has been, home. Most residents have the strongest attachment to the village of their birth and upbringing. They continue to identify themselves as "being from" that village even after marrying and perhaps moving away. A few people have changed allegiance, now identifying themselves as "being from" the locale into which they married and which is the natal village of their children.

Others who identify themselves as Alutiiqs have more tenuous ties to the peninsula. They may have been born and raised in Anchorage and as children spent only summers in the village or at their grandparents' fish camps. Some rarely visit the peninsula. Others have chosen to move to Anchorage, Fairbanks, or the Lower 48 as adults. Still others alternate between stints in the city and periods back home in the village. Those urbanites I met who identified themselves as Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs referred to the Alaska Peninsula as their home, regardless of current residence. For instance, I asked one woman who now lives in California and was temporarily in Anchorage if she was going "home," by which I meant California. She answered, "Yes, I'm going to Chignik Lake."

Urban Alutiiqs expressed a strong desire to return "home" periodically, although some admitted that they could

not live there.[117] They reactivated their ties to the land through visits. Alternatively, if they could not return in person, they devised other ways to maintain those ties. For instance, during starring they might call a relative in Chignik Lake and listen to the singing over the telephone. The strength of the attachment to the Alaska Peninsula homeland is measured by distance not in miles, but in mind.

Not everyone with ties to the land can or does lay claim to being an Alutiiq. Locals also must acknowledge at least four other ethnic symbols, and their claims must be generally accepted.

Symbol 2: A Belief in a Shared History with Other Alaska Peninsula Alutiiqs

In Chapter IV I discussed the importance of the Katmai eruption as a unifying symbol of the common history of Alutiiqs throughout the Alaska Peninsula. Other aspects of a shared history are also passed down through the generations. Except for the Katmai story itself, almost all local history is perpetuated through oral transmission. To date, there is very little in the way of written history

[117]People gave various reasons: they had married someone who would not fit in with the small-town atmosphere or subsistence lifestyle at home; they could not make money at home; or they found the social pressures and close scrutiny of village life too oppressive.

of the area. Thus to the extent that history exists at all, it must be passed down orally.

I found that middle-aged and young adults (those under 50) were quite knowledgeable about local oral traditions.[118] As mentioned above, people in this age range rarely told me "traditional" stories, or if they did, did so only in outline form. I therefore learned only indirectly of their knowledge of Alutiiq history and tradition, in the following way.

Midway through my field research, I printed more than 100 pages of transcripts of those narratives I had recorded or been told to that point. I made copies of the document which I took with me to the villages to show to the tradition-bearers as a way of checking my facts and interpretations. Once I obtained their approval, I distributed copies to younger adults in Perryville, Chignik Lake, and Ivanof Bay. I visited the various households during the next couple of weeks to learn the reactions of these young and middle-aged villagers. People told me that they were happy to read the same stories they had heard all their lives, and in some instances suggested that I check with a particular elder for additional narratives on specific topics. This confirmed my impression that most adults know much of the area's oral history.

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[118]I have yet to learn whether this level of knowledge extends to children.

I also took part in conversations in which several topics recurred with regularity. These included discussion and speculation about found artifacts made by (apparently) ancient peninsula inhabitants; anecdotes about particular influential people of the past (both family ancestors and more widely known people such as Spiridon Stepanoff, Dora Andre, and Wasco Sanook); the history of natural disasters (e.g., the Katmai eruption, the 1964 Alaska earthquake); remembered customs from "the old days" (e.g., the gambling game *kaatag*, New Year's celebrations); oldtimers' stories about the fur trade; family experiences in commercial fishing; and personal memorates tied to particular geographic sites on the peninsula (e.g., the story of the Russian spy who lived at Hook Bay, tales of shipwrecks or bear maulings). Although not all oral traditions are universally shared, I found a great deal of overlap in particular narratives. In addition, I observed that particular story types (e.g., the "clever Alutiiq" tales previously discussed) have wide distribution among adults of various generations.

Symbol 3: Acknowledgment of Alutiiq as the Ancestral Language

It is ironic that the characteristic by which outsiders and insiders alike have most often identified

Alutiiqs -- their language -- is imperiled. As discussed above, although the language is a frequent topic of conversation and continues to play an important role in ritual and the Alutiiq sense of history, the number of Alutiiq speakers is rapidly declining. Still, thanks to the few story books published in the 1970s during the heyday of bilingual education the Alutiiq language will likely never be forsaken, even after its last Native speaker dies. Because of the language's strong symbolic role, I foresee Alutiiqs of the future cherishing books written in a language they cannot understand, just as in the 1990s people reverently shared with me their old Church Slavonic Bibles, then carefully restored them to shoeboxes for safekeeping.

Symbol 4: Subsistence Lifestyle

The "subsistence lifestyle" with its concomitant emphasis on Native foods is a tremendously important symbol for Alutiiqs.[119] Like the other elements in the Alutiiq

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[119]Subsistence is perhaps the paramount ethnic symbol and political issue among Alaska Natives today, for whom it represents an entire rural-based way of life and culture inclusive of economics, religion, family and social structure. In contrast, to many non-Natives "subsistence" means only an economic system which, they feel, inequitably privileges Natives. A thorough study of this complex topic is beyond the scope of this project, but it is important to see the current Alutiiq emphasis on subsistence in its historic context as part of a statewide trend brought on by

identity configuration, subsistence is intimately connected with personal and generational ties to the Alutiiq homeland.

One part of the "subsistence lifestyle" involves the food quest. For those who still live on the peninsula, hunting, fishing, and gathering provide most of the dietary protein (Mishler 1991:16). Alutiiq men who live in Alaska Peninsula villages consider themselves first and foremost to be hunters and fishermen. Most of their daily lives are taken up in preparing for the hunt, undertaking it, processing the meat afterward, and discussing the experience. To a lesser extent those Alutiiq men who have moved to Anchorage or Fairbanks try to remain involved with the subsistence lifestyle. Almost all of them return (or try to return) to the peninsula for the summer commercial fishing season. When commercial fishing is closed for periods throughout the summer, they spend their time at their fish camps putting up subsistence fish and gathering berries. Similarly, urban Alutiiq women try to or express a desire to return to the village for fishing and berry picking each summer. The woman mentioned above who had married a Californian told me that each May she "gets

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changing technology, demographics, and political maneuvering.

itchy" and has to return home to help her father with the fishing and to "be home."

The emphasis on the food quest is reinforced in the folklore of the region. Not only do most traditional stories unfold in the context of hunting or fishing of some sort, but by far the majority of personal memorates which people share also revolve around particular hunting and gathering experiences.

The second dimension of the Alutiiq subsistence ideal involves partaking of the foods that were obtained through personal effort. I have discussed the role commensality plays in the Chignik mid-winter rituals and in namesday parties. But even those who live in Anchorage share in these rituals, albeit vicariously. They relish the "care packages" they receive from relatives living in the villages. Each time I returned to Anchorage from a visit to a village I was asked to take with me boxes of Native foods for relatives living in the city.

Like the language, subsistence and Native foods have become more important symbolically as their use and availability have declined.[120] Subsistence activities and

[120]Native potlucks in Anchorage and Fairbanks are an indication of the symbolic importance which Native foods have throughout Alaska. These potlucks, which may be occasioned by anything from a board meeting or year-end party of a Native organization to a Native arts festival or the arrival in town of a fresh halibut catch, are characterized by a large number of dishes, each made from a subsistence food obtained from the cooks' hometowns. The

their fruits represent more than ever Alutiiq knowledge, competence, self-sufficiency, and uniqueness in a time when people are concerned that these characteristics might be endangered.

Symbol 5: A Genetic or Adoptive Link to Alutiiqs of the Past

Just as kinship is the dominant theme in Alutiiq alliance and social structure, so kinship is a necessary prerequisite to being an Alutiiq. In this sense Alutiiqness is believed to be *ascribed*, not *achieved*; no one becomes an Alutiiq simply by acting or speaking like one. A person must be able to demonstrate a socially recognized kinship link with Alutiiq predecessors who themselves had a lifetime tie to the Alaska Peninsula. However, there is wide latitude in what is considered a

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most common dishes are those which are palatable to mainstream American tastebuds, such as fish pie, smoked salmon, fry bread, salmon chowder, and moose stew. *Akutaq* is generally also present. There are usually a few token "really Native" foods which most white people don't care for, like *muktuk* (whale fat), herring eggs and seaweed, and seal oil. The food is discussed, described, and explained in detail. Women exchange recipes and compliment each other, but the greatest recognition is an empty serving dish at the end of the feast. These potlucks are immensely important in proclaiming Nativeness in urban situations in which Natives generally form a tiny minority and in displaying to the non-Natives present the bounty and wealth of Native cultures.

"socially recognized kinship link" (cf. Burch 1975). Those relationships may have resulted from descent, marriage, adoption, step-relationships, and what Burch (1975) called "lineal augmentation" ("Individuals could be third or fifteenth or hundredth cousins, or whatever, and still be considered 'blood' relatives in the Eskimo scheme of things" [1975:51]).

Although kinship is a necessary part of Alutiiqness, it is not a sufficient condition. Unless the other four dimensions of Alutiiqness are brought into play, one of two things occurs. Either Alutiiqness becomes irrelevant through lack of interest or interaction on the part of the individual in question, or Alutiiqness becomes irrelevant because no one knows of its existence (for instance, in the case of a person adopted out of Alaska).

Related to the question of kinship, Alutiiqs associate certain phenotypes or physical characteristics with Alutiiqness. These include black hair, brown eyes, olive skin, and relatively short stature. Many Alutiiqs acknowledge Caucasian ancestors and recognize that not all Alutiiqs exhibit these characteristics (Frieda Kosbruk's "blue-eyed blonde" Kodiak Alutiiqs are standard characters in stories which have a moral about the unimportance of physical appearance), but the fact that those who do not conform are remarked upon emphasizes their deviation from a more common type.

Local Manifestations of the Alutiiq Identity Configuration

Historically, Alutiiq villages were isolated and largely autonomous. This circumstance led to local variations in dialect, lifestyle, and experience. Today, as in the past, different villages exhibit various emphases in the enactment of Alutiiq ethnicity. The major differences currently revolve around religious affiliation.

Chignik Lake. In Chignik Lake an inseparable part of being an Alutiiq is belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church. With the exception of the teachers, all residents are nominally members of the church and a majority are practicing members.

Russian Orthodoxy has been a part of the Alutiiq identity configuration on the Alaska Peninsula at least since the mid-19th century. Residual elements of a pre-contact belief system have been incorporated into the Christianity the people practice. Shamanism and non-human beings figure prominently in the folklore (see the discussions of *Pugla'allria* and *a'ula'at* above), and midwinter rituals retain practices and meanings from a former day (see the discussion on masking in Chapter VI).

Orthodox residents from the Alaska Peninsula also experience the Russian Orthodox Church as a Native (though

not exclusively Alutiiq) institution beyond the boundaries of their villages. Saint Innocent Orthodox Cathedral in Anchorage serves as an extension of home for peninsula visitors and emigrants: the congregation is primarily Native, including a large contingent of Alutiiqs from the Alaska Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak as well as Unangan, some Yup'iks, Dena'ina, and Tlingit Indians. To some extent, while a person from Chignik Lake is in Anchorage, his social and religious activities -- in fact, the way he spends an important portion of his time -- are shaped by the church, just as his hunting, social, and ritual activities are affected by his own church at home.

The Alutiiq interest in subsistence practices also takes a particular direction in Chignik Lake. That village is noted for its brown bear hunters, their traditional and respectful attitude about their prey, and the persistence of rituals involving disposal of the bear's head. Clark's River, a short snowmobile, honda or skiff ride away from the village, is the site of a heavy concentration of bears. Men usually hunt them in early December after the first snowfall. A large body of local lore surrounds the brown bear. Stories center on hunting experiences, bear behavior, maulings, use of the meat, fat, and intestines, bear-human shapeshifting, and particular types of bears which have supernatural abilities and powers.

Perryville. Because Perryville is currently facing what some elders perceive as a crisis in religious identification, its residents have begun to deemphasize religion as an identifying ethnic characteristic. While Orthodox parishioners may lament but accept the loss of their children to another religion, they refuse to lose them to another culture. They are therefore in the uncomfortable position of having to redefine Alutiiqness to include those who are not Orthodox. In departing from what they see as the "baseline" Alutiiqness which existed in pre-Katmai days, they are undertaking exactly the sort of shift that Spicer described:

> Symbols shift in identity configurations as the interests of the people concerned change. . . . At any given time an identity configuration is characterized by intensifying or waning sentiments regarding the symbolic content of the system. . . . Even though a people is characterized by long continuity, that does not mean that its identity system goes on unchanged for that long period. On the contrary, it is more likely that a people sustains continuity just because its identity system is responsive to the changing conditions to which the people must adapt (1980:314-5).

Out of context, Spicer's statement is somewhat misleading, for it masks the difficulty of the process whereby the "symbols shift." In retrospect, these shifts are invisible to the people. For instance, there is a perceived continuity, expressed in Alutiiq lore, between precontact

shamanism and Russian-era Orthodoxy. The two are seen to be coterminus, compatible, and comparable. There is no social memory of the undoubtedly painful process which led to the current situation in which Russian Orthodoxy is seen to be "traditional."

But in the current case, when the religious identification of Alutiiqs is in question -- that is, while the symbol shift is actually underway -- people have difficulty accepting it as a normal process of ethnic responsiveness. The process is painful; perspective is lacking. The memory of Ivanof Bay's desertion makes the current experience both more difficult and more bearable than it might otherwise be. On the one hand, people remember and anticipate the bitterness which occurred only 30 years ago when six families left Perryville. On the other, residents of the two communities have begun a rapprochement through mutual visits, phone calls, and resource sharing. The people see that they can -- indeed *must* -- reframe their relationships along lines other than religion if they are to maintain a valued closeness.

One of the ways relationships are reframed in Perryville is in terms of local history. The Katmai story, along with other oral traditions about life in the past, has become Perryville's most important symbol of cultural integration and ethnic identity. Similarly, Perryvillers emphasize sense of place, subsistence lifestyle, the

heritage of the Alutiiq language, and kinship as defining characteristics of Alutiiqness.

Ivanof Bay. Ivanof Bay has completed the process which Perryville seems to be entering, the repudiation of Russian Orthodoxy as a symbol of Alutiiqness. The village's founding couple, Olga and Artemie Kalmakoff, were raised in Russian Orthodoxy but chose to convert to the fundamentalist evangelical Slavic Gospel Mission in the early 1960s and to raise their children in that church. In leaving Orthodoxy, the Kalmakoffs did more than change religions. They also removed themselves from a system which organized all aspects of life, including the yearly hunting and ritual cycles, the choice of marriage partners, naming procedures, and the social group with which they habitually associated. They entered into a new system of relationships which revolved around the new church and congregation. For instance, when the Kalmakoffs now stay in Anchorage, they interact primarily with non-Alutiiq people through their church, seeing friends from Perryville and Chignik Lake only incidentally at bingo parlors or other public places.

Still, Ivanof Bay villagers are not removed completely from the Alutiiq sphere. For instance, some villagers have married Alutiiqs from Kodiak Island communities which have a similar history of fundamentalist evangelism. Continuity

with past traditions is most strongly maintained through commercial and subsistence fishing and hunting. These activities continue to form the economic base for Ivanof Bay residents as for other Alaska Peninsula inhabitants. Summer fishcamps located in Chignik Bay provide opportunities for socialization with other peninsula Alutiiqs, as well as with the local "Scandinavian-Aleuts." In addition, Ivanof Bay adults continue to recognize, but not emphasize, a common history, language, and culture with their Orthodox neighbors, but they express a more clear and constant focus on their church and its members.

Attitudes toward Symbolic Changes. Between the Orthodox faithful and those who have "left the church," whether they live in Ivanof Bay, Perryville, or Port Heiden, I heard expressed a mutual feeling of sorrow that the others have somehow "gotten it wrong" or "gone astray." I found no evidence among converts to evangelism that the repudiation of Russian Orthodoxy is considered the first step in their eventual exit from Alutiiqness as a whole. As social ties weaken and interactive patterns change, the number of situations in which Alutiiqness is relevant will necessarily decrease. But no matter how infrequently such situations arise, the Alutiiq identity will become irrelevant only when the people themselves no longer consider it important. Furthermore, as long as fragments

of social memory and oral tradition survive, the *potential* for the reactivation of Alutiiqness remains.

The changes in religious affiliation in these three villages form a pattern which may be helpful in describing and understanding symbol shifts in ethnic identity configurations elsewhere. The first reaction, repudiation of what are perceived as new -- and hence wrong -- symbols, is exhibited in Chignik Lake today and Perryville in the past. Not only are non-Orthodox proselytizers run out of town, but individuals who have left the church are seen to have suffered divine retribution. A subsequent step in identity configuration change is evident in Perryville today, whereby the "old guard" has gradually come to accept *individuals* whose symbols have changed, but not the new *symbols* themselves. Orthodox church members currently feel they have little choice but to accept new religious affiliations, the alternative being complete estrangement from loved ones. Older people like Ignatius and Frieda Kosbruk express anguish for the souls of the unfaithful, but they have begun to temper these expressions in the presence of relatives who have made the break. In the final step in symbol shifts, people accept a reworking of the configuration itself, as has occurred in Ivanof Bay. People there see no conflict between evangelism and Alutiiqness, for they no longer consider religious affiliation a constituent of ethnic membership.

Historical Perspective

The core and local elements in the Alutiiq identity configuration have thus changed over a period of 200 years as people accomodated existing social and cultural practices to new pressures from outsiders. Ethnic feelings have waxed and waned in reaction to perceived threats on the one hand or welcomed technological innovations on the other.

Today's Alutiiqness has its roots not in a distinct and consciously recognized ethnic entity but in a common language which was only slightly different from the language spoken by neighboring peoples, and in a geographic accident which placed the ancestors of today's Alutiiqs in the line of the expansion of the Russian fur trade. The language spoken by Alaska Peninsula Eskimoan peoples varied in a dialect and sub-dialect continuum from locale to locale until, at its northwesternmost extent, it was essentially Yup'ik. The late 18th or early 19th century incursion of Yup'ik-speaking Aglurmiut, whose dialect was somewhat different from that spoken on the Alaska Peninsula at the time, contributed to the separation of Alutiiq from Yup'ik by breaking the continuity of the dialect chain.

In early historic days the speakers of the language that is today called "Alutiiq" identified with each other in a symbolic sense -- that is, they recognized a common

language, origin and distant kinship -- but not in a political or emotional sense. The only group entity larger than the family which claimed their allegiance was the village -- and even this allegiance was undoubtedly subject to factionalism along family lines.

In designating the Pacific coast peninsula Eskimoan speakers "Aleuts," the Russians placed them in a class of Natives along with the unrelated Unangan and the Koniags to whom they were culturally related. Activities associated with the fur trade and Russian Orthodoxy ensured continuing close economic and religious ties to the Russians. In time, the Russians' observations of "Aliaksintsy" linguistic and cultural affinities were systematized and reinforced through the organization of the Russian-American Company (through the Katmai *artel* and the Kodiak regional center) and the Russian Orthodox Church (through its Kodiak, and later Afognak parishes). From the late 18th century the Russians increased pan-Alutiiq interaction by moving Alaska Peninsula hunters to various locations on the Peninsula and Kodiak Island. At the same time, the village remained the locus of identification and of economic activity through the office of the *toion*. Peaceful interactions with outsiders increased and armed conflict ceased. When foreigners moved into Alaska Peninsula villages, the newcomers were incorporated into the local

language, culture and society to the extent that their lifestyles and intentions were compatible.

Thus the Russian-American Company and the Russian Orthodox Church provided the necessary over-arching structure which tied disparate peoples into a single system and allowed for an elaboration of ethnicities. Through frequent interaction among Native peoples, differences in some cases were highlighted, in others subsumed within local custom. By the end of the Russian period Alutiiqness had begun to have a meaning which contrasted with Russianness, "Yup'ikness," "Unanganness," and "Athabaskanness." Still, individual movement among language groups was common and Alutiiqs' contacts with Russians were not frequent or pervasive enough to produce a reactive retreat into a full-blown ethnic identity.

It was only during the American period -- and in fact after the Katmai eruption -- that an Alutiiq identity was strengthened and unified. Increased interactions with "cultural others" -- especially Americans -- who rejected much that was familiar to the Alutiiqs resulted in a conscious withdrawal into indigenous identity. At the same time, the Alutiiq population moved into more stable and populous villages which were concentrated along the southern portion of the Alaska Peninsula's Pacific coast, resulting in more uniform experiences and allowing for a more unified Alutiiq outlook.

The result was that a symbolic representation of Alutiiqness, based on practices which had been in flux throughout the precontact and Russian periods, solidified during the American period. The identity configuration which elders of the Alaska Peninsula today consider the "traditional" way of life is largely that which was in existence precisely at the time of increased contact with American immigrants. With the exception of Russian Orthodoxy, which is now being challenged as an Alutiiq symbol, the same symbols continue to form the core of today's Alutiiq identity configuration.

Balancing this trend toward ethnic stability and uniformity has been the Alutiiq pattern of strong village identification. Because the villages on the Alaska Peninsula are relatively isolated, each has developed in tandem with, but somewhat independently from, the others.

Alutiiqs have not been unaware of the historic changes they have undergone. The Katmai story illustrates those changes most vividly. At the same time, much of the lore currently told portrays the present -- although outwardly very different from the past -- as a re-enactment of principles which were established long ago. In their rituals as well peninsula Alutiiqs have maintained continuity with the past in the merging of symbols and practices from an Eskimo base with imported Russian elements.

Ethnicity Models

Ethnicity as Conflict

At the beginning of this dissertation I quoted Eric Hobsbawm's concern that ethnicity is the basis of much social conflict, and his suggestion that more study be made of the "short-term changes and shifts of ethnic identities" (1992:5) as a way to better understand, if not predict, those conflicts. In my discussions of changes both *toward* an Alutiiq ethnic identity and *within* the identity configuration once it was established, I have emphasized not the role of conflict, but the economic, religious, and social policies enacted or initiated by the hegemonic powers which produced reactions and creative solutions among local Alutiiqs in the form of ethnic differentiation. Similarly, I have followed historical sources in qualifying the role conflict has played on the Alaska Peninsula. The earliest Russian visitors describe some battles between Alutiiq speakers and Russians (cf. Polonskii n.d., Izmailov 1787, Black in press), but for the most part they give the impression that after initial difficulties, relationships between the two peoples proceeded with little strife (cf. Wrangell 1980). That this impression is somewhat one-sided

is indicated by examples in Alutiiq folklore. While narratives concerning "Russians" (e.g., *Macintine*) do not depict armed battle, they do make clear the dissatisfaction local Alutiiqs felt with the economic and social arrangement established by the Russians.

Despite animosity in the face of inequality, by the beginning of the American period many of the cultural forms imported by Russians had been accepted by Alutiiqs as part of their own culture. This did not mean that there were no symbolic boundaries separating Russians and Alutiiqs -- the Alutiiq identity configuration consisted of a great deal more than individual Russian-appearing elements such as religion and language. Nor did acceptance of Russian beliefs or practices necessarily translate into wholesale acceptance of Russians (note, for example, the Russian spy stories). Still, the situation presents an interesting irony, for just as the cultures began to look alike, they became more socially distinct.

In this regard, Barth noted,

> The important thing to recognize is that a drastic reduction of cultural differences between ethnic groups does not correlate in any simple way with a reduction in the organizational relevance of ethnic identities, or a breakdown in boundary-maintaining processes (1969:32-3).

Furthermore, appearances are somewhat deceiving; as I discussed earlier, the "Russian beliefs" which the Alutiiqs

accepted were altered and syncretized with preexisting beliefs as they were accepted into the Alutiiq worldview. Thus, on the one hand, cultural similarities between Alutiiqs and Russians did not dissolve ethnic boundaries but were generally irrelevant to them, and on the other, those similarities were in some cases smaller than they appeared. Cohen (1986) summed up difficulties inherent in inferring cultural homogeneity from common appearances:

> We should not confuse an increasing similarity in the machinery of people's lives with their responses to it. The response -- interpretation, meaning -- is not mechanical, and frequently is not overt. It belongs to the realm of phenomena which anthropologists label the "symbolic". It is in the symbolic that we now look for people's sense of difference, and in symbolism, rather than structure, that we seek the boundaries of their worlds of identity and diversity (1986:2).

Symbolic conflict may therefore be present, even when cultural forms are similar. Ethnic tensions persist in the Alaska Peninsula in life and lore, fueled by stories of past injuries and by contemporary episodes of racial prejudice and inequity. Yet today the possibility of organized armed conflict between Alutiiqs and other Alaskans along ethnic lines is so remote as to be inconceivable, indicating that too much should not be made of the conflict model of ethnicity as it relates to the Alutiiq case. While it is true that conflict sometimes

provides an opportunity for the expression of ethnic identity, so do other, more positive situations. For instance, Christmas starring is carried out not as a show of ethnicity for the benefit of outsiders, but as an expressive religious ritual of integration and *communitas*. Similarly, when elders shared oral traditions with me, they emphasized not the ethnic differences separating us, but pride and joy at the accomplishments of their past.

Neither did I observe a tendency toward conflict in Alutiiqs' dealings with ethnic "others." This is perhaps due to the persistence of traditional Eskimo values concerning the proper treatment of outsiders. Today as in the past, strangers are redefined as kin to the extent possible. In addition, there is no recent history or precedent suggesting battle as a strategy to deal with ethnic differences. In fact, the "enemy" has been redefined to consist entirely of *Taya'uqs*, against whom no battles have been fought in living memory. Finally, until recently Alutiiq villages have remained fairly isolated and the people have been allowed to carry on their lives largely unmolested, minimizing opportunities for conflict.

These situations suggest that ethnic differences are not an inevitable precursor to ethnic schism or violence. The Alutiiq case shows a people who have a strong sense of ethnic identity, but whose attitude toward ethnically different people is as often incorporation as repudiation.

The Situational Model of Ethnicity

Spicer (1980) and others (e.g., McFee 1968, Hicks 1977, Clifford 1988) have dealt with changes in ethnicity which resulted when subordinate minorities adjusted behavior or self-definition to deal with their positions in a multiethnic system. I have described a number of such changes in Alutiiq ethnicity and the contexts in which they arose.

But there is another point to be made about ethnic expressions, a point which Hicks (1977) and Stern and Cicala (1991) in particular emphasize: the creative nature of ethnicity. Not only do people react to external forces in portraying and shaping their ethnicity, they are also active participants in determining the nature of their ethnic identity and in deciding how that ethnicity will be perceived by outsiders. Just as through performance -- the result of the interaction among the ideal shape of a story, the artistry of the performer, and the many facets of context -- folklore "emerges" (cf. Bauman 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990), so through expression or action -- again, an interplay of an individual's understanding of a set of ethnic symbols, his or her personality, and the context -- does an impression of a particular ethnicity emerge. Father Harry Kaiakokonok and George Kosbruk projected their

images of Alutiiqs when they told the Katmai story. Like all good storytellers, they consciously revealed what they thought their audiences needed to know, shaping their narratives to the circumstances and audience in order to achieve particular effects and to communicate particular points.

Similarly, in November 1992 Ignatius Kosbruk creatively manipulated ethnic images when a representative of the state Department of Fish and Game visited Perryville to conduct a sea mammal study. During an interview with her Ignatius spoke at length about the conservation practices he had been taught as a boy and had always followed. He contrasted these Alutiiq virtues with the practices followed by "sport hunters," who are for the most part white men from Alaskan cities or the Lower 48 who travel to the Alaska Peninsula for trophy antler racks or bear skins. At the beginning of the interview, Ignatius set the tone:

> Are we on tape now?
> As far as I'm concerned, sport hunters, they shouldn't leave the meat in the ground and just waste it. Just waste it!
> I don't know, maybe about 10 or 15 years ago, way back in '80s or '85, Father Harry, when he was alive, we stopped at Pilot Point and Port Heiden where we seen the hunters. They were just killing the poor animals, innocent animals for nothing! And they just waste the meat and didn't give none to the Native people.
> And Father Harry went down and asked, "What you guys do with the meat?" They just looked at

> him. Their plane was loaded with nothing but horns.
>
> So we don't want that to happen. We want to work with you people so everything will work out smoothly amongst the Fish and Game and the Native people here, Perryville and Ivanof, whichever they are, all the Natives, Peninsula and north side.

Ignatius consciously invoked the images of Native hunters as conservationists, of sport hunters as wasteful, and of Fish and Game officials as allies of the Natives. He framed his cultural information in a way that would benefit his people and would reassure state officials that he and they were working toward the same goals.

In this kind of manipulation of images, in the choices people make as they decide when or whether to activate their status as Alutiiqs, in the stories which define Alutiiqness by contrast with outsiders, in Alutiiq history as people tell and understand it, can be seen the creativity and emergent quality of ethnicity and the utility of the situational model I have followed here. I found no impermeable boundaries separating self-contained "groups" of Alutiiqs and whites. Instead, I found individuals making choices within the parameters they perceived to be available to them.

Ethnicity can be oppositional, confrontational, exclusive, and reactive. But it can also be creative and welcoming. Ethnic symbols bring joy through their

enactment. The history of a people reminds them that they are a special people, a "chosen" people. It helps them decide what sort of humans they are and want to be in the future.

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APPENDIX

MACINTINE/McINTYRE NARRATIVES

Macintine as told by Spiridon Stepanoff

Chignik Lake, Alaska, 1969

Recorded in English

SS: Spiridon Stepanoff

DK: Don Kinsey, teacher and interviewer

Transcribed by Patricia H. Partnow

SS: Oh yeah, long time ago. The first, like, the Kodiak king, he get killed, you know. And it always used to be bishop come up all the time, you know. In Kodiak. All the villages, you know. And that, that superintendent of the AC Company, he don't like that priest come [unclear], and he stop the people gonna hunt. That's what he did. So they don't hunt when the priest's around, you know. So the priest went along. They had big schooner *Kodiak*, you know. They used to go to the Bristol Bay with that schooner, to, around Nushagak. And it was first when they started that Nushagak. And that priest went along up there. They had a Russian church up there. And they throw them overboard.

DK: They threw the priest over, huh?

SS: Yeah. Priest overboard. They [unclear] to the priest, they will come back with him. And there was two Indians from up there, Bristol Bay, you know, they pulling along out in the bay. And they see the sea gulls. Fine weather. All they see, are the sea gulls starting just flying, just sea gulls flying. They pull off with those, with them fellas' line, you know. Sea gulls. Just flying around up in, like long pole. Sea gulls all together like that, even at dark. And they get up there, there was a man floating. That bishop, you know. And they don't know much about the priests, them fellas, you know. And they haul it up [unclear] of some type. They they got somewheres down -- and got hold of 'em in Kodiak. Some of them send a letter down there, they found him dead up in Bristol Bay.

Had to wait long, that fellow name been Macintine. Macintine was the superintendent's name, you now. Yeah. That priest never come back.

Same fall, there was a little boat, little economy boat, you know. Coming from outside. Sailing. One man. And he was Russian. They had black sails, come to Mitrofan. He wouldn't do nothing! He just stay around there, and that superintendent went down, that fella stayed in Kodiak. So they stayed around, well they always climb up that big high mountain, you know. Back there by the Kodiak town. See that mountain? Sharp [Pillar] mountain?

So they had a big cross up on top there. So they always walked up to there all the time. And he stayed around, all summer stay around.

So Macintine get tired of him. "What are you sticking around for?" Well, that fella didn't never say nothing. In the fall, when he was gonna ready to go down [to Seattle], loading the schooner up for fall, big boxes full of nothing but otter, sea otter skins. And they load 'em up the schooner. Just for to bring 'em down. He and his gang go down, they used to go down the wintertime, you know. They were -- only summertime they used to come up. Stay all summer, Kodiak.

This fella -- they killed a cow. He was right there alongside the work [unclear], you know, Macintine. And they ration out chunks, you know. So many pounds for that people, so many pounds for the -- for everybody in his gang, you know. So this fella he come up too. "Won't you give me a little piece for my supper?" Macintine says, "Ah! You! You're not my man. You're not working man. You don't do nothing! You don't get nothing from me! You get home!" "All right," that man, he said, "Thank you very much!"

He went aboard to his schooner. Seen him, everybody seen him, onto his schooner. In dark, in the fall of the year, you know. Windows open like this, you know.

They start to eat, all those, and they cook, start to eat supper, the fresh meat. So they get down to this fella. He put some [gun]powder and he's waiting in there. They put the fuel, I guess, but the fuel didn't burn. And he went to show. They went to show [unclear] that Macintine. But he was eating supper, and they watch him through the window, you know. But he shot. Buckshot. Back, shot him, bang, bang, two shots. One fella fall down. All three of them fall down. Stunned 'em. One fella get up. "Somebody playing here? Somebody playing here?" They light a lamp, he was found over there, his head all messed up, Macintine. He killed. This fella, this fella, he was howling, "Who's playing around here?", and he got this big scar, buckshot. Just missed him. He would have killed two of 'em.

DK: This guy shot 'em then, huh?

SS: Uh huh. Reported it right away, that somebody shoot. Went down to his boat, to blame it right away. [Unclear] and down there. Sure enough, all full of powder. They would have raised the whole town, that time, you know. But then they found it out that fella done it with just, with the [unclear] schooner.

And they went round, looking 'round, when the trail goes up to that big high mountain. They follow the trail up to the mountain. They know they used to go up there all the time. All night. When they got about halfway, he left

his waistcoat right in the road, rolled 'em. They went up a little ways, he took his cap off, and left 'em in the road. They climbed up the mountain. Way up on top. Pitch dark night. Everybody went up on top. They couldn't see any -- course, they didn't have no flashlight. They didn't see nothing. They had lanterns. Couldn't see nothing, they come back.

And there was [unclear] right on the post, "Anybody seen somebody walking strange places, and you get $10." They went down below [to the lower 48], them fellows. Took the Macintine along with them, along. Lots of people made the money for nothing. Once in a while they'd say, "There he is, up there! See the man up on the hill!" One of the bosses would go, go find him, they find nothing. Never find him, all over the Kodiak and they're climbing mountains, look for that man. Never find him. Never find him.

So [unclear], they see the ship come up to, to behind that Kodiak. Everybody seen him go up to that, to [unclear] Harbor, [unclear] up there. Next morning, he was gone. I think that's when they had the time, you know. What time they gonna kill him. That ship come after him. And the town [unclear].

DK: And they went out. They never did see him after that?

SS: Never did see him, no, after that. He left his boat in Kodiak west coast.

DK: He tried to burn his boat, though, huh?

SS: Oh, he tried to burn his boat. But he don't -- the fuel didn't work.

DK: I'll be darned. Well, then he had that all planned out, didn't he?

SS: Yeah, he had it all planned out, yeah. Probably he was some [unclear], I guess, because that ships used they to go down every year, you know.

Murdered at Table by Heywood Seton-Karr

Reprinted from *Shores and Alps of Alaska*
Chicago: A. C. McClurg. 1887.

St. Paul, Kodiak Island, Alaska,
November 3d, 1886

The night before last I was the eye-witness to a shocking murder -- none other than that of the general agent, whose corpse is on board. We start at noon for California, nearly two thousand miles distant.

We were seated at supper at six o'clock in the evening -- McIntyre at the head of the table, and Woche, a storekeeper, at the foot. Ivan Petroff was by my side.

The meal was nearly over, and McIntyre had half-turned to get up from his chair, when a terrible explosion suddenly occurred, filling the room with smoke and covering the table with fragments of plates and glasses.

McIntyre never moved, for he was killed stone-dead in a moment. Woche fell under the table, and then rushed out streaming with blood in torrents, for he was shot through the lower part of the head. The double glass window was smashed to atoms, for a cowardly fellow had fired through it, from just outside, with a spreading charge of slugs, presumably aiming at McIntyre, who received the main part of it in his back. Meantime the murderer who had thus shot into a group of unarmed and unsuspecting persons had time to escape.

I succeeded in stopping the bleeding from Woche's wounds, every one appearing paralysed!

The suspected man, Peter Anderson, a Cossack of the Don, cannot be found. He had, we found, attempted to fire his sloop, lying at anchor near the wharf; and had refused employment at cod-fishing, in order, as he said, to be present at the departure of the schooner. He had also been seen loitering with a gun behind the house. He owed money to McIntyre, who had twice fitted him out for sea-otter hunting, but both times he was unsuccessful.

We have been scouring the woods with rifles, but the natives are frightened to death. Not a light can be seen

in any house after dark for fear of its being shot into by this madman, who is still at large if he has not committed suicide. Nor can any of them be got to stir out at night, or to keep watch like sentries over the sloop, in case he should return, unless a white man is with them (Seton-Karr 1887:231-32).

McEntyre's Death by Wesley Ernest Roscoe

Originally published in *The Weekly Humboldt Times* of Thursday, December 9, 1886

Reprinted from Roscoe, Fred, *From Humboldt to Kodiak 1886-1895*. No. 40, Alaska History Series. Fairbanks: Limestone Press 1992, pp. 7-8.

A week ago last Saturday Petroff and I were tracking up an enormous bear whose track was two inches longer than my own. Little did we then think that the following Saturday we would be tracking a murderer, but such was the case.

Last Monday evening, Mr. McEntyre [sic], the local agent of the Alaska Commercial Company, was shot in the back of the head, neck, and upper part of the shoulders while eating supper, by a fiend who fired through the window with a breech-loading double-barrelled shotgun. Mr. Wock [Ernest's spelling; the correct name is Woche], who

once saved the murderer's life by rescuing him from freezing, was sitting at the other end of the table and received a buckshot just below the left eye and a little to the right of it.

Mr. McEntyre was killed so suddenly that he did not move, and he was finally taken down by Mr. Petroff who discovered that the blood was running out of his mouth. One of his fingers was cut by a shot -- he was just taking something to his mouth -- and his hand did not even fall to the table. I was called over just in time to see Mr. McEntyre breathe his last. Poor man! I had been talking to him just a few minutes before.

The murderer was a Russian from the river Don. A most determined search has been made for the man, but as yet he has not been captured, though he was seen to come out of a ravine just at dusk and run across a pasture to an adjacent forest by a boy who had a spy glass.

People discredited the boy's story, [but] Petroff and I took our guns the following morning and soon found his tracks where the boy said he had gone and followed them for over a half mile till we came to a much travelled path close to a house occupied by a man who had been suspicioned of helping the murderer by feeding him, etc. The murderer had taken pains to travel just inside of the paths, in order that we might not notice his tracks.

We have searched every hiding place in town and have searched the adjacent country as well as possible, but without success. We have notified other settlements to look out. As there is no boat or bidarka missing, the man has not left the island.

There are no officers here to look for the fiend, and only a handful of white men. The creoles and natives are good for nothing to hunt for him. They will go with the white men, but they are scared out of their senses, and we are far more afraid of being shot by them accidentally than by the murderer. They are so frightened that they will not go to the woods to chop wood.

We think that when the snow comes we can catch the wretch, as he will have to get food, and he cannot avoid leaving tracks. One man found where a man had been lying down in the woods, but we are more in the dark now than ever. However, we do not intend to rest easy till we have him secured.

We sent Mr. McEntyre's remains home by the *Kodiak*, and Mr. Wock went along to secure medical treatment as the doctor is not here at present.

Justice Served by Fred Roscoe

Reprinted from *From Humboldt to Kodiak: 1886-1895.* No. 40, Alaska History Series. Fairbanks: Limestone Press 1992, pp. 6-9.

I can remember my parents telling this story. The episode occurred in the fall of 1886 soon after we arrived in Kodiak, when I was much too young to remember it myself.

Peter Anderson (Andresoff in Russian) was a shiftless, irresponsible sort of person. He lived with his squaw by the Aleut village outside the town of Kodiak. When winter came the year before, he had gone to Mr. McEntyre [sic] at the Alaska Commercial Company store and got fitted out with traps and supplies to go hunting and trapping for the winter. He set the traps but failed to look after them and didn't even go to take them up when the trapping season was over. He used up all the supplies but didn't go hunting either. This year when winter was approaching, he came to get fitted out again, but this time Mr. McEntyre refused. Peter Anderson became very angry and left.

That evening Mr. McEntyre, a Mr. Woche, and some others were eating supper in the dining room of the Company house (built by Alexander Baranof in the 1790s; now the Baranof Museum, also called the Erskine House). Peter Anderson slipped up to the window and fired a charge of

buckshot into the back of McEntyre's head, killing him almost instantly. One pellet hit Mr. Woche in the face, but he recovered.

A native boy came running up to our house. He said, "Mr. McEntyre shot; Mr. Woche." (He meant Mr. McEntyre and Mr. Woche were both shot.)

. . .[Here Roscoe reprints his father's letter]

Two years later, three white men went to another island. When they came back, they reported seeing a wild man eating a crow. He still had his gun, but he was a tatterdemalion; his overalls were worn to shreds, with no legs up to his thighs. When he saw them, he started to run. They hollered for him to halt. No result, so they fired a shot over his head. He disappeared in the brush.

Everybody around Kodiak seemed to think that was a just ending to the story of the mysterious escape of Peter Anderson.

Excerpts from Presentiments: An Alaskan Reminiscence by Boris Lanin[121]

Undated manuscript from the Bancroft Library

. . .[The tale is set within the context of the wisdom of heeding presentiments]

During one of my many journeys to Alaska I made the acquaintance of Mr. M---, a native of Vermont, who had just been promoted to the position of general agent in charge of one of the large trading districts controlled by the Alaska Commercial Company. M.-- was a true type of the practical, enlightened business man of New England, of remarkable administrative ability, keen perceptions, but not at all given to peer into or speculate upon the things beyond his mortal vision. At the same time he was possessed of a wholesome practical spirit of benevolence which gave him a wonderful influence over the unsophisticated natives with whom he had to deal. I will close my description of the man by stating that while obtaining at once the respect and good will of employers and subordinates alike, he converted within a few years a district encumbered with a considerable annual deficit into one of the most profitable branches of a vast enterprise.

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[121]Pen name of Ivan Petroff.

When I first met him I was engaged in researches of an historical and scientific character and, busy as he was, with his work of reorganizaton, Mr. M--- gave me the most valuable assistance. Our next meeting in Alaska took place in the spring of 1881, when I was about to set out upon a journey of exploration under the auspices of the U. S. government.

. . . [The 1881 encounter is here described]

Some years after the wreck of the "St. George" I was appointed customs collector at Kodiak and renewed my acquaintance with M--- which by that time had developed into sincere friendship. He went home to Vermont every winter while my duties kept me at my post the year round. In the summer of 1885 M--- arrived in Kodiak by steamer from one of his trips to the outlying stations. As soon as I met him I knew that he was either ill or disturbed in mind, and as we walked along slowly to the custom house he told me what had troubled him, in the following words:

> Yesterday morning, when the steamer was running along westward with a light breeze, about 150 miles east from here, I came on deck after breakfast. The crew were having their meal, also, and there was nobody on deck but I and the man at the wheel. There was a heavy fog all around us, but as I leaned over the bulwarks, gazing into vacancy, the curtain of fog suddenly parted and there lay a sloop, almost under our counter, hove to, with no one in sight but two small dogs, who set up a dismal howl when I hailed the craft. At the first noise the sliding door of the cabin, which was located forwards, opened and the upper part of a

> man appeared -- a red, coarse face almost hidden in beard and unkempt shock of black hair, joined almost without neck to an herculean body with immense breadth of shoulders. He scowled at me and as he scowled I began to feel sick and faint. At last he answered my hail in broken English -- I should take him for a 'Dago' or Portugese. he said he came alone from Sitka and was obliged to heave to when he wanted to sleep. After asking for the course to Kodiak, he swore at his whining dogs in the most brutal manner and crawled back into his cabin. With his disappearance I began to feel better and we soon lost sight of the queer craft in the fog. But I have been 'out of sorts' ever since and just now the same feeling of nausea is coming over me again. I must get to the house as soon as possible and take some quinine.

"By the way," continued M--- after a pause, glancing at the gray sea in the distance, where it seemed to merge into a leaden sky, "what sail is that just coming into sight?" I hurried into the custom house to get him a pair of marine glasses which he took and looked long and anxiously at the approaching craft. "By Jove," he exclaimed, "It's the same sloop -- how could that cursed craft get here at the same time with our steamer when we left her hove to and her master turned in?"

M--- left me a few minutes later, evidently in no better spirits than he had displayed on his arrival, and in due time the sloop dropped anchor close in shore and turned out to be the "Peter Anderson" of Port Townsend. When her master landed he introduced himself in the same name,

though he was a Russian, from the town of Rostoff, in the Don Cossack country.

He claimed to have been engaged in halibut fishing in the Straits of Fuca (which was then and is probably now equivalent to opium smuggling) and to be desirous of hunting sea otters in the Kodiak district, for which purpose he requested M--- to fit him out.

The agent did not like the fellow, but it was the Company's policy to engage any white man coming to the district either to enter their service as traders or sailors or to fit them out to hunt for the Company, especially such as had vessels of their own, and consequently there was no choice. The so-called Peter Anderson was supplied with provisions, rifle and shotgun with ammunition and four natives with their canoes and sailed for one of the hunting grounds north of Kodiak.

A few days later the natives returned in their canoes, stating that they were afraid of the man and would not hunt with him under any consideration, and not more than a week or two elapsed before Peter Anderson himself returned without even having attempted to hunt.

The good hearted M--- who was about to sail for his winter's vacation, fitted him out once more with provisions and foxtraps [sic] in addition to his guns, advising him to winter at the south end of the island and do the best he could. Having some official business to look after in the

same direction I engaged passage on the sloop for about half the distance he had to make. The greater part of our course lay through island channels between smaller islands and as they were unknown to him, I offered to steer. The surly fellow never answered but simply left the tiller and disappeared in the cabin from which he never emerged until, within a half hour's sail from my destination, a white squall struck us and he was obliged to come on deck and help me save his sloop. After I had landed, he came ashore also, bringing his shotgun with him. Though he knew I was his countryman he always addressed me in his broken English and it was only by hearing him speak Russian to some of the natives that I convinced myself of his nationality and of the truth of his claim to hail from the banks of the Don.

After landing he proceeded to a large boat that was lying on the beach and began to load both barrels of his shotgun. He filled them nearly half full of the largest buckshot. I warned him that the charge was too large and that even if the gun did not burst, the charge would tear the skin of any fox or otter all to pieces. He replied with a sinister smile: "Maybe me no want shoot fox or otter -- maybe me shoot something want plenty shot," and with that he began to lash the gun to the gunwhale of the boat, fastened a string to the trigger, retreated a short distance and discharged both barrels at once. To my greatest astonishment the gun stood the test and its owner

turned to me again with as near an approach to a smile as he was capable of. "Me want find out he good or not good - he all right." I then settled with him, paying $25 for a day's journey during which I had done all the sailing and steering. The fellow never thanked me, but returned grumbling to his sloop and sailed away in the direction I had pointed out to him. At the time he had only one dog with him. The other one had sought shelter in the first house she found open in Kodiak, refusing to go back to the sloop. A small yellow cur still on board was nearly always tied and howled whenever his master came near him.

I returned to Kodiak by canoe and heard no more of Peter Anderson until the following spring when some hunters reported he had lost his sails in a gale and had run his vessel ashore, living in the cabin all winter without doing anything but making new sails from blue drill which he had obtained from one of the Company's agents on credit. A few days later the now notorious craft came in sight with its drill sails looking black in the distance and a small flag at half mast. Curious to know what was the matter I pulled out to him and found he was sick with symptoms of scurvy. I assisted him to the anchorage and then hastened ashore, for the dirt and stench on board were simply terrible, and after sending him some fresh provisions and medicine I reported his appearance to M--- who had already returned from Vermont. An expression of intense loathing came over

his features when he found out that he had once more to deal with this man. He overcame the feeling, however, and made arrangements to send him off in search of sea otters again as soon as he should have recovered his health. The disease yielded rapidly to treatment and in two weeks, to M---'s evident relief, the little sloop disappeared once more from Kodiak harbor.

In the middle of the summer of 1886 M--- was called to San Francisco on business and did not return until August. Immediately after landing he told me that he would have given anything to save himself from returning to Kodiak. The business was not quite as profitable as usual on account of the competition of a rival firm and his employers had not been quite as pleasant as in more prosperous times. Among other matters, the Peter Anderson affair, small as the outlay was, had been mentioned in an unpleasant way and it had hurt M---'s feelings. He assured me that it was with the greatest repugnance that he again embarked for Kodiak, his mind turning at intervals, in spite of his efforts to avoid it, upon this trifling affair and the unwelcome prospect of meeting once more the man from the Don.

Sure enough, a week had not elapsed when the uncanny craft, with its sombre sails came gliding into the harbor again -- the provision lockers empty and not a single skin to tell of any attempt at hunting. With the greatest

impudence the owner demanded to be fitted out a fourth time, but this the agent absolutely refused to do, offering at the same time to employ him about the station or on one of the Company's vessels, so as to enable him to pay off some of his indebtedness to the firm. This reasonable proposal he rejected in his turn as well as all other offers of employment from other parties, and for several months he seemed to wander about aimlessly in the woods or hid himself from sight in his miserable cabin, making occasional apparently purposeless trips in his sloop to neighboring Creole settlements. At last, in September, when a large steamer called on her way to San Francisco, M--- became very anxious to go home. A few hours before the vessel was to sail he asked his bookkeeper who was to remain in charge whether he could get along without him and give him a chance to get home to Vermont. "Oh, no," he replied, "several matters have to be attended to before you leave and besides, there is that Cossack -- he is away just now and you must make some disposition of him for the winter; nobody else can deal with him." I never saw M--- look more unhappy in his life than when he found he could not conscientiously leave in that steamer.

Well, he stayed, and his "evil spirit" came back and lounged about the village, doing much talking with the worst characters among the lower class of Creoles. At last the extensive business was being closed up for the winter,

a smart little schooner lay ready loaded at the wharf and the Captain had orders to sail the following morning, November 2nd. It wanted five minutes of six p.m. when I found myself in M---'s room with some ships' papers which required his signature. He signed his name in an absent manner and told me at the same time that he had been obliged to give Peter Anderson a good scolding for allowing the traps entrusted to his care to become spoiled with rust. "The man acts like an emetic upon me," he said. "I have tried to do my duty by him in spite of my dislike for him, but I don't see how I can help him against his will." He then invited me to share the last meal with him and we walked into the dining room together. This was an oblong apartment with a window at one end, within four feet of the head of the table, so that M---, sitting down, had his back to the curtainless window. Being the 1st of November night had of course set in and a bright hanging lamp was burning over the table at which six of us at last sat down, M--- at the head, as I said before; on his left a warehouseman and the bookkeeper, on his right I sat and next to me a lieutenant of an English lancer regiment who was on his return from an attempt to ascend Mt. Saint Elias and also intended to sail on the schooner. At the foot of the table, facing M---, sat the agent in charge of an outlying station who had come to receive orders for the winter. At the begining of the meal M--- seemed low-spirited and to a

remark that on the day following at that hour he would be far away at sea, he answered with a sigh, "Oh, I don't know, one can never be sure in this country;" but later on he rallied and took part in the conversation, which was turned upon sport and bear hunting by the lieutenant, who expressed his unwillingness to meet a bear without his heavy calibre "express" gun. "Oh, no," said M---, "I can tell you that at close range a double barreled shotgun loaded with slugs or buckshot will do more execution than your rifle, if it did cost nearly $500."

By the time dessert was served M--- was joking with the station agent who was very sensitive to sarcasm, and I was just bending over my plate, forming the crumbs into mathematical figures, thinking how soon we would be left alone again for another long dismal winter, when suddenly there came a loud explosion, a crashing and jingling of glass and something whizzed by my nose creating quite a current of air. By the time I looked up at what I imagined only a lamp explosion, the table was almost deserted. The station agent was groaning under the table and when I turned to my left I saw M--- still sitting in his chair, with a pleasant smile lighting up his open honest features. But from under his chin on one side, the bright red blood came oozing out and then I knew for the first time what had happened and that it was no broken glass that whizzed by my nose. The window, which opened upon a narrow alley, was

almost demolished, both frame and glass being shattered -- had the murderer stood but two feet farther off he would have raked us all with his shotgun.

By this time the lieutenant came rushing in again to assist the wounded man into another room and made good use of his but recent experience on the battlefield of Tel-el-Kebir, to arrest the flow of blood, while I let M---'s stiffening form down from his sitting posture onto the floor and then hurried out to aid others in looking for traces of the murderer. When I entered M---'s room again his body had already been washed and laid out. I looked at the clock; it wanted just five minutes of seven, exactly one hour since he had signed my papers.

I had my suspicions as to the perpetrator of the foul deed, which were confirmed when daylight came and the Cossack's skiff was lying upon the beach, not tied. I jumped and pulled across to the sloop. It was tenantless and presented a picture of desolation. The owner was missing and with him the shotgun he tested so thoroughly a year before.

The following morning the schooner sailed with her full complement of passengers, but one of them lay stark and stiff in the hold instead of in his pleasant stateroom, which was occupied by the wounded man on his way to the nearest medical assistance, 1700 miles away.

We who had to remain in the panic-stricken settlement where no crime had ever been committed within the memory of man, hunted and scoured the woods and hills in search of the ruffian, but all in vain. No trace of him or his gun were ever found, though it was impossible for him to leave the island and no boat or canoe was ever missed. His own craft he had intended to destroy as I found a pile of combustibles and cans of powder arranged in the hold, with a train of powder leading to a little coal oil lamp, but the lamp had evidently gone out before a connecting whisp of paper had become ignited.

Well, that is all, gentlemen. I hope I have not detained you too long. It has always struck me that if poor M--- had paid more heed to his vivid presentiments he might have been alive today.